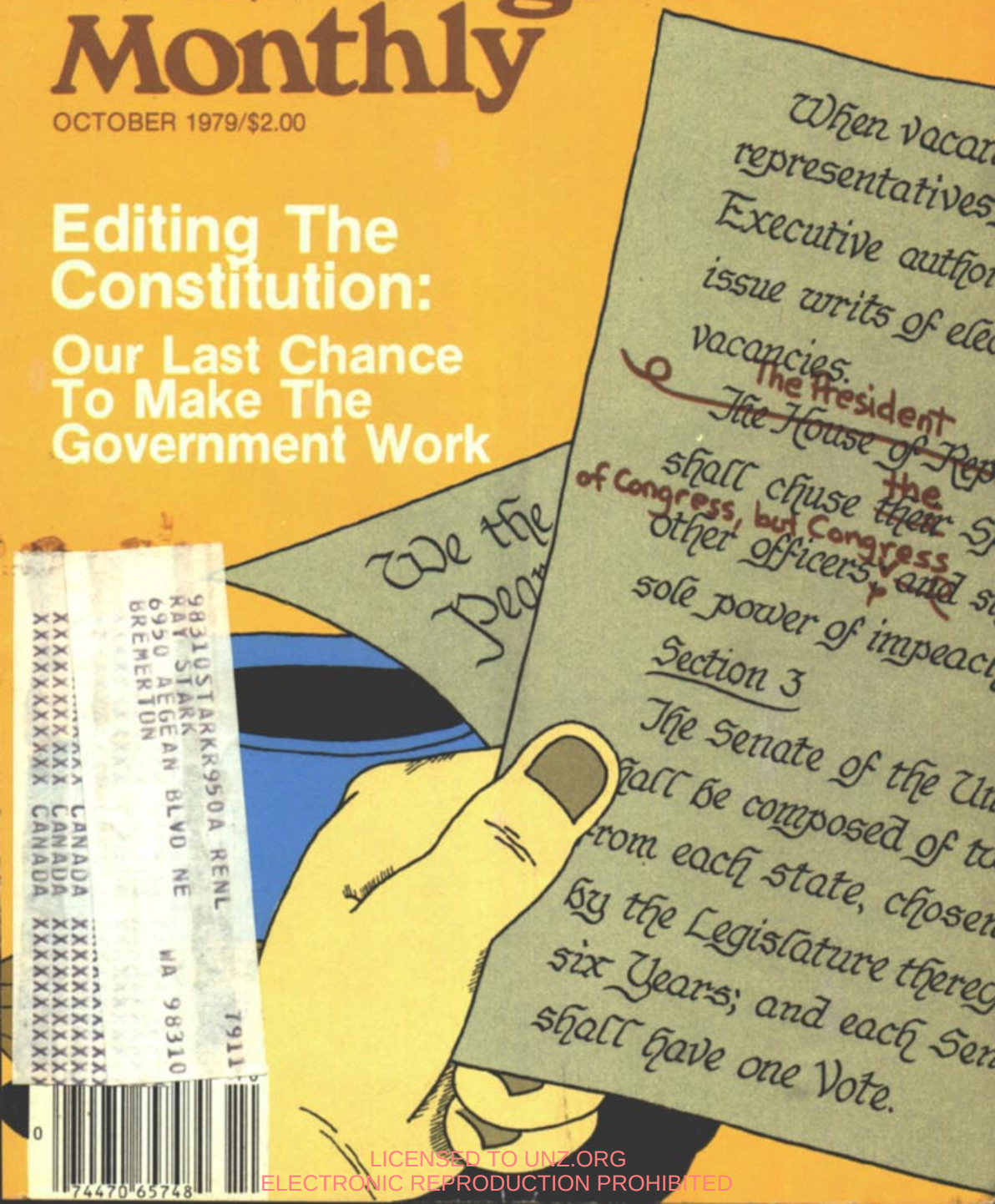
JAMES FALLOWS ON THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRESS

The Washington Monthly

OCTOBER 1979/$2.00

Editing The Constitution:

Our Last Chance To Make The Government Work



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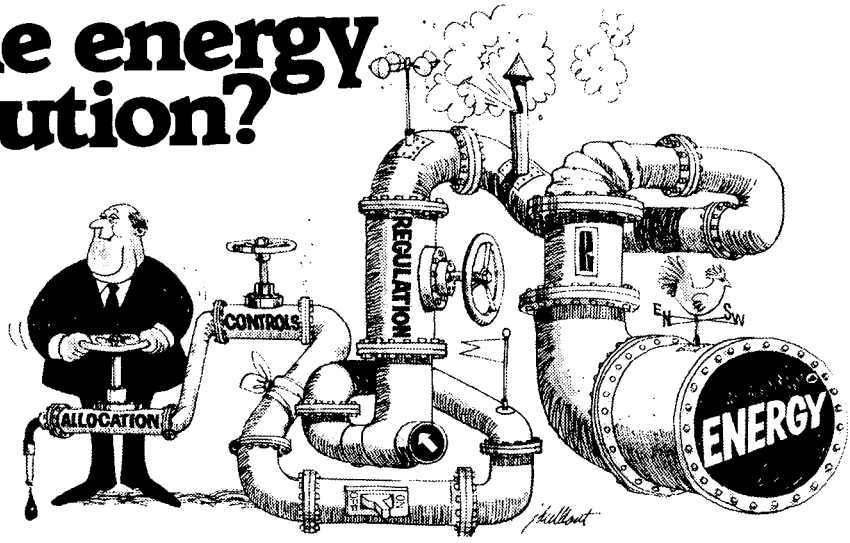
The energy solution?



Get government out of the business.

There *is* an energy problem in this country—not because we have run out of oil, natural gas and coal—but because for 25 years the private sector's ability to find and produce those resources has been disappearing as the federal government became more and more involved in the energy business.

- Since the Federal Power Commission began to *regulate* the price of natural gas in 1954, there have been shortages of gas in the consuming states and surpluses in the producing states.
- Since the Federal government began to *control* the price of oil in 1971, domestic production has failed to keep up with the demand and today accounts for only about half of the crude oil we use.
- Since those price controls were put on oil, OPEC has charged 2 to 3 times as much for its oil as American producers are paid for theirs.
- Since the Federal government began to *allocate* gasoline, supplies have not shown up where they are needed, when they are needed.

No wonder the country has an energy problem. The government—Congress and our Presidents—have been applying *political* solutions to problems which require common sense free enterprise responses. They have been trying to repeal the law of supply and demand!

A reading of events of the last 25 years should indicate the essential first step in sound energy planning...get government out of the energy business while there's still a chance to solve the problem. Amway Corporation, Ada, MI. 49355.

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Letters

Art of the Leak

A small point regarding your story on "leaking" ["The Art of the Leak," July/August 1979]:

In the paragraph concerning my story about Schneiders and the speechwriters, my reference to Doolittle's "reputation for making wisecracks about Carter" did not come from Schneiders. Indeed, I never heard Greg say anything derogatory about Jerry... and Greg would probably be the last person in the White House troubled by "wisecracks about Carter." So the sleuths you cite on the speechwriting staff are wrong and you are wrong.

In my conversation with Schneiders in connection with that piece I told him at the outset that it had to be completely on the record because he figured in it. I believe in protecting sources, but I don't believe in deceit, which your account implied.

CURTIS WILKIE
Washington, D.C.

Curtis Wilkie is a reporter in the Washington bureau of The Boston Globe.

The Data Game at HEW

Regarding the article in your June issue criticizing our attempts at HEW to implement the Education of the Handicapped Act ["The New Data Game At HEW"], there are some facts that your readers really deserve to know.

Parents of handicapped children have undergone a long, frustrating battle to try to secure education for their children. In time they managed to achieve two generations of State legislation, with the first encouraging local districts to educate handicapped children and the second theoretically *mandating* such programs. In practice neither the carrot nor the stick was truly effective. In frustration, parents turned to the courts, and in one state after another suits were filed demanding that handicapped children receive the same educational rights afforded non-handicapped children....

The guiding principle handed down in these cases is that states and local districts must make affirmative efforts to identify and serve handicapped children, not just sit back and wait to have children brought to their attention by parents. That principle became a central feature of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act....

Our letters to state officials have clearly indicated that we were interested in their establishment of a good *process* of finding children, not in attaining some absolute percentage. Since the 1950s and long before the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped came into being, the U.S. Office of Education and virtually all experts in the field were agreed that about 10 per cent of school-aged children are to one degree or another handicapped. Subsequently, the estimate was raised to 10 to 12 per cent, as educators became aware of children with specific learning disabilities (serious language, reading and math problems). Congress included these children in the Education of the Handicapped Act. There was no BEH "survey" as the article reports incorrectly.

This is not to say, however, that the 10 to 12 percent figure was thereby enshrined, as witness the following quote from letters sent to the State Commissioner or Superintendents:

"The highest priority for the use of these (Federal) funds should be for activities relating to identification, diagnosis, and the initiation of new programs or expansion of existing programs.... *Should such activities and effective programs fail to result in increased percentages of children served, no absolute quotas would be imposed.*"

None has been, and no State has been rejected for funding as a result of this initiative....

At the same time that we are encouraging states and local districts to find handicapped children who need help we are guarding against over-counting. We have discovered (prior to your article) and ordered corrected procedures in Oregon and Tennessee which have resulted in children being over-counted or questionably identified as handicapped.

EDWIN W. MARTIN
Washington, D.C.

Edwin W. Martin is the deputy commissioner for the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped.

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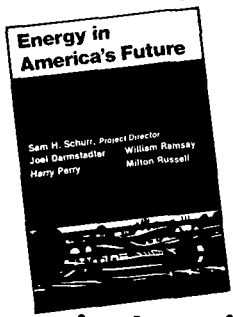

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Sam H. Schurr, Project Director
Joel Darmstadter, William Ramsay, Harry Perry, Milton Russell

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YOUR CAR AND TOMORROW'S FUELS

AS THE SUPPLY OF OIL DROPS, SYNTHETICS BECOME MORE ATTRACTIVE.

General Motors is not in the fuel business. But since the cars we build depend on fuel, we have to be on top of the energy situation. Here's the way it looks to us.

All the cars we build are powered by internal combustion engines. These engines work by burning petroleum-derived gasoline or diesel fuel under high pressure. So far, petroleum has been the safest, least expensive source of these hydrocarbon fuels, which pack a lot of energy per gallon. But automotive fuels can also be obtained from many other sources, ranging from oil shale to coal and even corn stalks. The problem is to turn these solid materials into safe, convenient, environmentally sound, cost-efficient liquid fuels.

At GM, we have evaluated a variety of domestic resources and alternative fuels.

Fuels made from shale oil are the best current alternatives. Shale oil is produced by heat-treating oil shale, an abundant American resource. Gasoline and diesel fuel could be refined from shale oil. What is needed, however, are the plants to convert the shale rock into the shale oil. As petroleum becomes more expensive, it will be cost-efficient to build these plants. The mining of shale, though, still presents serious environmental problems that must be solved.

Coal is the next best option. Coal can also be turned into gasoline and diesel fuel, but the process is more expensive and complex than that for oil shale. As with oil shale, coal mining also poses environmental problems.

Biomass (vegetation and organic wastes) is another possibility. The main advantage of biomass is that it is a renewable resource. However, biomass is difficult and expensive to collect and process.

The only automotive fuel currently being made that uses biomass is gasohol. Gasohol is a blend of 10% ethyl alcohol and gasoline. The use of gasohol in present-day cars can save gasoline and causes no insurmountable difficulties.

Hydrogen has often been discussed. Although engines can be run on hydrogen, its production potential appears limited, and the practical problems of safe and efficient distribution and storage haven't yet been solved.

Although electricity isn't a fuel, it can be generated from non-petroleum resources. Some electrically-powered cars are already on the road. The problem is that with current lead-acid batteries they're only capable of traveling relatively short distances between battery charges. We're continuing to do extensive research on advanced zinc-nickel oxide storage batteries.

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Tilting at Windmills

Having been a bit unkind to Teddy Kennedy recently, I feel I owe it to him to rise to his defense in the matter that he has been most maligned about—Chappaquiddick. I have two questions for his critics: 1) Are you confident that you would have emerged from the water after that accident with a clear-cut program of what ought to be done? 2) What would you have said about the accident and events leading up to it, bearing in mind the hurt you might inflict on your wife and Mary Jo Kopechne's parents? If you've been in a serious auto accident, you know the effects of shock and how disorienting they can be. And have you never been in a situation where telling the entire truth could hurt others far more than it would help anyone?

Liberal guilt is becoming a dangerous factor in press coverage of the District of Columbia government. For years the level of ineptitude and scandal in Walter Washington's administration as mayor were not exposed because he was black. Now Marion Barry, another black, has received worshipful coverage in both the *Star* and the *Post* for a trip to Africa that he took while the District's budget was pending in Congress. Yet both papers condemned Jimmy Carter for taking a trip down the Mississippi while important issues were pending in Washington. Marion Barry could be a better mayor than Walter Washington. But he won't be if he too escapes the bracing tonic of a critical press. . . . Walter Shapiro, who served as editor and contributing editor of this magazine for several years before joining the government (first as special assistant to the secretary of Labor and then as a member of the White House staff), returns to our masthead as a contributing editor this month. He will also serve as contributing editor of *The Washington Post Magazine*. While he was in the government, he wrote three articles for us that appeared under a pseudonym: "Money Doesn't Talk in Washington" (December 1977), "Strangers in a Strange Land" (March 1978), and "What Cabinet Secretaries Do All Day" (February 1979).

When I attended Columbia in the late forties, the low standards of its Teachers College were already the scandal of the university. Emphasizing method in the form of "education" courses, it so ignored substance that its graduates, while they may have known how to teach, seldom knew *what* to teach. I am reminded of this by an excellent article by Gene Lyons in the September issue of *Texas Monthly*. Among other things, the article mentions that 535 first-year Dallas public school teachers were outscored on a test by a group of seniors from a Jesuit secondary school in Dallas, and that of the applicants to teach in the Houston public schools, one-half scored less in mathematics achievement tests than the average high-school junior, and almost a third were similarly defective in English.

Graduates of Texas teachers colleges are issued Texas teaching certificates as long as they have completed the specific "education" courses required. As for substance, Lyons found that at one of the "better" Texas teachers colleges, the committee in charge of

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making sure students were adequately grounded in the substance of the subjects they were to teach had never met. To be sure, the state requires that if you want to teach ninth-grade typing you must have taken a course in typing, but you also have to have taken 24 hours of "business education."

These education courses are so intellectually numbing that no one of any wit can endure them. This means, quite simply, that we have a lot of stupid public school teachers. That, not racial problems, not student violence, is the central problem of our public schools today.

The shocking fact is that this scandal has been going on for so long. I have personal knowledge of its existence from my student days at Columbia in the forties to my years as a parent dealing with the District of Columbia public schools in the sixties and seventies.

Why does the scandal continue? Because of the power of the education industry, the teachers colleges, and the teachers unions (the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers). Remember Joseph Nocera's article on the recent strike in the District of Columbia schools and the arrogance of the teachers who refused to work after 3:15?

The teachers should scare you. The reason they should scare you is that they show what white-collar unions can do to resist reform of any kind. Suppose we as a nation finally decide to do something about the inept and unaccountable bureaucracies that constitute most of our federal, state, and local governments. They will resist reform with even more ferocity than the teachers, for they have more votes, a lot more votes. Federal white-collar workers, for example, were able to get Carter to raise their wages by seven per cent this month even though everyone knew they were already overpaid.

The white-collar problem is not confined to the government. During the last dozen years or so white-collar employment has risen at a rate three times greater than blue-collar employment throughout the economy. The thing that unites all these bureaucrats, from payroll clerk to president, is an expectation of higher pay without regard to performance. Mark Green, in a forthcoming issue of *New York* magazine, shows that in 15 major companies the salaries of the top executives rose in a year that the profits of their respective companies declined.

Blue-collar workers are every day assailed with righteous injunctions to be more productive. I want to incite them to turn on their oppressors. Let's have workers from the UAW and the UMW assess the productivity of all the bureaucrats, including those in the auto companies *and* those at the union headquarters.

In 1961 I witnessed a crash of a United Airlines DC-8 in Denver in which a lot of people were killed, not by the impact but by their inability to get out of the plane before they were overcome by smoke. Now I read that United recently twice failed tests to evacuate a DC-8 in the time required by the FAA. According to Patricia R. Miller, president of the Association of Flight Attendants, the FAA permits the airlines to test evacuation procedures using as make-believe passengers flight personnel who rehearse for days—instead of using a mixture of old people, children and everyone in between who make up the usual passenger load. So if United couldn't pass that test until its third try, you might want to try another airline... If you're learning to hate the FAA, let me add a little more fuel to the flame. The FAA is now planning to spend $100 million to develop airports away from metropolitan centers so all the drunken and incompetent private pilots will use them and not threaten commercial flights at major airports. Ask yourself why you should be paying anything for private planes. Why not let them pay for their own airports?... In case you don't think we have a class problem in America, you might consider the following from a study by the Carnegie Council on Children: Children whose

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families are in the top one-tenth of the income distribution are 27 times as likely to achieve upper-income status in adult life as are children of *identical ability* from the bottom one-tenth... The other night I was reading *Piercing the Reich,* a book described in its subtitle as being about "The Penetration of Nazi Germany by American Secret Agents During World War II." Most of the "penetrations" occurred in 1945. If you remember, the European war ended in early May of that year so the OSS agents were parachuted to the ground just in time to greet the American jeeps and tanks that were sweeping across Germany. Like so many stories about the CIA, this would be funny if it weren't so tragic. Many of the agents lost their lives....

When you're wondering how to con your employer, remember this excerpt from Stu Eizenstat's famous pre-Camp David memo:

"Your enormous success in the Middle East peace process was due, to a very large degree, to your personal, constant involvement over a sustained period of time. The energy situation is different in many ways than the Middle East, but the need for you to stay the course, to demand answers, to convince others of the need to act and to compromise, and to control the competing forces within the Government is very similar. With that type of involvement, we can regain the initiative and rise above much of the confusion and bureaucratic tangling now occurring."

You have read about the increasing number of tax evaders. You don't hear about the big ones, however, because the Internal Revenue Service concentrates on easy-to-audit middle-income taxpayers in order to impress Congress with the total number of audits it performs each year.... Benjamin Civiletti, the new Attorney General, got off to a typical cabinet officer start. First, he went to a fancy resort, the Greenbriar Hotel at White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, to make a speech. Second, he looked at a hot potato and denied its existence. Here is

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how he reacted to the possibility that illegal means may have been used by Israeli intelligence to find out what was said in Andrew Young's meeting with the Arabs: "I have seen no information or evidence that it was bugged or surveilled." Does this remind you just a tiny bit of the way the late J. Edgar Hoover used to retort to allegations that there was such a thing as a Mafia?

I recently visited a 17th-century country graveyard and was struck by the fact that while a lot of the graves were for children and a lot were for people in their seventies and eighties, there were very few for people in-between—the ones who are dying today, from auto accidents in their teens and twenties and from heart disease and, most of all, cancer in their fifties and sixties. You have to take my word for the graveyard, but, if you doubt me on heart disease, cars, and cancer, just take a look at the obituary page of your local paper. . . .

My latest cause: Save the helium. The National Research Council estimates that 85 per cent of America's enormous helium reserve will disappear within 30 years. The government stopped stockpiling helium a few years ago and it is now being vented or wasted at an alarming rate by the producers of natural gas. Why should you care about helium? Because it could enable us to have a great fleet of zeppelins.

You will probably rank this enthusiasm somewhere between my advocacy of jay-walking and my campaign to put banks on top floors. Almost everyone thinks the zeppelin died with the Hindenberg. But the reason the Hindenberg burned was that it did *not* have helium. And the reason for almost all the other crashes of lighter-than-air ships during the twenties and thirties was the primitive state of weather forecasting that led them into violent storms. Lighter-than-air flight can be more energy-efficient than any other form of transport. With helium, and with today's weather forecasting, we could combine that energy efficiency with safety. *The Washington Star* says that Goodyear is planning a new generation of air ships. So let's make sure there's some helium left for them to use.

This summer an NBC News-Associated Press poll showed 68 per cent of the people in favor of the SALT II agreement. Another poll by Elmo Roper, taken a few weeks earlier, showed only 33 per cent for the treaty. The NBC-AP poll asked only, "Do you favor or oppose an agreement between the United States and Russia that would limit nuclear weapons?" Roper, on the other hand, spelled out some specifics of the agreement. Finally, Americans for SALT, a group lobbying for approval of the treaty, is running ads saying "Seven out of 10 Americans approve the SALT II Treaty." This claim is based on an ABC News Poll that asked only if the respondents would favor a treaty between the United States and Russia "to limit their ability to fight a nuclear war." Andrew Alexander of the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* has explained the reasons for the difference. National polls cost a lot of money and the less questions asked the lower the cost. Networks don't want long, complicated stories anyway. So a desire for brevity combines with a desire to hold down costs to produce public opinion that is not public opinion at all.

—*Charles Peters*

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The President and the Press

by James Fallows

Midway through the summer, as news of President Carter's cabinet changes was shaking up the town, I talked with a reporter who once covered the Carter White House. "The problem with these people," he told me, "is that they don't know any history. Don't they remember who the last president was who fired his whole cabinet? Who went around talking with demonstrators in the middle of the night? Who planned trips to China when he was in a jam? These guys learn nothing from history."

He was right, I thought. But while diagnosing the problem, he had also demonstrated it. In order to indict the administration for its ignorance of history, he was willing to dig in the archives as far back as 1969. In attempting to mark off his distance from those who held power, my friend revealed his fundamental resemblance to them.

When President Carter made his cabinet changes, the only "history" that came to mind was Richard Nixon's demand for wholesale resignations the day after his election victory in 1972. But there have been cabinet purges throughout our history. Another analogy, for example, and one less automatically damning to President Carter, could have been found in the administration of Andrew Jackson. In 1830, the second year of Jackson's term, tensions between two factions in his cabinet grew acute. The disputes were personified in the bitter rivalry between Martin van Buren, then secretary of State, and John C. Calhoun, the vice president, to succeed Jackson as president. As the tensions grew intolerable, Van Buren offered his resignation, and Jackson took the opportunity to dissolve the whole cabinet, replacing it with one in which Calhoun's influence was diluted. Four years later, Jackson had yet another cabinet shake-up, shortly after beginning his second term. To end bickering over economic policy, he fired and transferred half a dozen secretaries. Afterwards, says Arthur Schlesinger Jr. in *The Age of Jackson*, "the administration was streamlined for action."

Neither of these situations was an exact parallel to Carter's, but they resemble the Carter changes more closely than do any of Richard Nixon's acts. Had they informed the frantic press commentary in the first days after Carter's firings (or if the administration had had the wit to steer reporters to anecdotes like these), they might have indicated that changing a cabinet was not necessarily a sign of mental instability or political crudeness.

Similarly, when Robert Strauss went on his mission to the Middle East and Andrew Young spoke with the PLO, the headlines warned: "Split in Middle East Policy." Indeed there was a split, and anything else would have

James Fallows is the Washington editor of The Atlantic *and a contributing editor of* The Washington Monthly. *This article is adapted from a lecture he delivered earlier this year at the Poynter Center of Indiana University.*

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been a surprise, since American policy toward the Middle East has been divided through all the 30 years of Israel's existence, and long before. The struggles between Harry Truman and James Forrestal, which eventually led to Forrestal's refusal to support Truman in 1948, his removal as secretary of Defense in March 1949, and his suicide five days later, can be read in part as a history of disagreement over Zionist rights. Every year some magazine publishes an article on "Arabists in the State Department," because the Arabists have always been there—just as there has always been deep, substantial support elsewhere in the government for Israel's cause. The policy has been divided because there is something to be said for the claims of each side; and to present this new disagreement as a sudden shock, or as an indication of chaos in the government and disregard for Israel's security, is to distort our understanding by ignoring all that went before.

I do not claim that all reporters lack a sense of the history of American government, that it is necessary in every case, or that I am myself so steeped in knowledge of the past as to look good casting stones. But I do believe that the balance in reporting on the government has swung too far away from an awareness of the government's history, and too near an obsession with current politics; and that in this it mirrors the limitations of those in the administration itself.

The Adolescent Administration

When I speak of history, I do not mean show-off allusions to Shay's Rebellion or the Tariff of Abominations, nor dissertation topics narrowed to the head of a pin. Rather I mean a prudent awareness that others have walked many of the same paths before and that, from their errors, some of one's own errors may be spared.

Without such knowledge, a leader, or a nation, is like a teenage boy on the verge of puberty, unaware of the powerful hormones that will soon be coursing through his body. As those hormones take hold and work their predictable changes, the young man will not understand why he is covered with acne, consumed by lust. He will not be able to recognize such signals and remember their consequences in others. Being able to recognize the signals would not alter the symptoms, but it might forestall some of the most harmful results.

If there is a wave of sympathy developing for the Carter administration it may arise from this very perception: that, like the crack-voiced teenager, the President is simply unaware of the powerful changes going on, and somehow cannot be blamed for their effects. For some future administration that does have an interest in the tutorial value of history, the record of the Carter term may be read as an illustration of how much time will be wasted if one insists on making every mistake anew.

Let's return to President Carter's cabinet changes. Two-and-a-half years into his term, President Carter at last acknowledged that "Cabinet government" would not work—that he could not expect coherent policy if he took no steps to offset each secretary's pull toward the interests of his own department. He acknowledged as well that his White House staff could not really function without a central point of coordination, without the glue of mutual loyalty, reward for excellence and penalty for failure to cement others' interests to his, and to convince people that they must do their best.

But consider the evidence from not-too-remote history that had been available to him the very day he took office. Three months into his own term, John Kennedy was humiliated by the Bay of Pigs invasion. It was a disaster, but a useful one, for Kennedy learned its lessons. He saw that an entrenched government bureaucracy might have interests different from his own, and that he must leave no doubt in their minds about whose interests must prevail. Allen Dulles and Richard Bissell of the CIA had talked him into the plan; he got rid of them both. Nor

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would Kennedy rely any further on the "experts" in the usual chain of command for information and advice; their recommendations had done him wrong. Eighteen months later, during the Cuban missile crisis, Kennedy applied the lessons of his failure. By that time, he was dealing with a bureaucracy that had taken the examples of Bissell and Dulles to heart. It was better to cooperate with the President, to anticipate his needs and interests, to give him honest answers and not try to mislead him about the chances for success, if one hoped to survive. And the Executive Committee with which Kennedy huddled during the "thirteen days" was not confined to those with formal line responsibility for Soviet and Caribbean affairs or the technique of naval blockades, but included others outside the chain of command whose counsel the President valued. Kennedy himself might go even farther outside the chain, calling up a desk office to be sure that he had all the facts he needed, and that he had heard different points of view.

No other president might ever face strategic circumstances identical to those of October 1962, but every one of them would have to contend with the same bureaucratic culture. They might learn, from Kennedy's record, the importance of digging constantly for information and of giving the scattered bureaus of the government a carrot-and-stick incentive to follow the President's plans; or they could wait for their own Bay of Pigs to demonstrate the limits of their information and the folly of thinking that cooperation would automatically come.

Eight years after the Bay of Pigs, and eight years before Jimmy Carter took office, Richard Nixon offered another textbook lesson on the mechanics of governing. He began his administration heaping praise on his cabinet; these men were not simply superb, they also possessed "an extra dimension." He would leave the operations of their departments in their capable hands. Within months, Nixon saw how much the departments' interests might gyre away from his own; much of his

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remaining time was devoted to increasingly drastic plans to bring the departments to heel. Gerald Ford took over from Nixon with promises that the departments would be free again, and that his White House staff would be organized like the "spokes of a wheel," with many independent and equal aides reporting freely to the President.

The plan was designed in revulsion against the "Berlin Wall" of Haldeman and Ehrlichman, but it ignored the organizational reality that had given Haldeman and Ehrlichman their power in the first place. Two-and-a-half years later, as Ford's team packed up to leave, the chief of staff, Richard Cheney, had a souvenir bicycle wheel, with all but one of the spokes bent and twisted out of shape. Cheney wanted to give the wheel to Hamilton Jordan, wanted to explain to him the lesson it symbolized: that it was essential to have one man coordinating all the others. But Jordan wasn't interested. Cheney was reduced to making his point to Stephen Hess, nominally the transition consultant (and, ironically, one of the great proponents of "cabinet government"), while Jordan and others sat in a back room drawing up the real plans.

Perhaps Jordan will try to press such a souvenir into the hands of his successor. In all likelihood, he will be talking to a wall. He will find, as Cheney found, that he is dealing with people vain enough to think that the difficulties of others cannot possibly apply to them, and oblivious enough to history not to know that each of their predecessors once felt the same way.

But if the administration was slow to absorb these lessons, the press was rarely able to help straighten them out. A few reporters were suspicious from Day One of the plan to operate without a chief of staff, and some of them explained why in their stories. Apart from that, I recall no article pointing out the evidence that cabinet government would not work, no attempts to pump people like Cheney for what they had learned. With their eyes on the new crowd in town, few reporters get around to mining the rich lode of knowledge in those like Cheney who are just on their way out. Not only are they free to say things they could not say before, but also they can *see* things to which their previous positions made them unconsciously blind. In the month or so after his departure from the United Nations, Andrew Young is sure to be grilled about blacks-and-Jews, or his role as a new black leader, or the chances of swinging the black vote for Carter in 1980, but I will give a bottle of champagne to the reporter who asks what Young has learned of the United Nations and the special world of diplomacy. He has moved on to make news elsewhere, and his U.N. experience is now history.

Carter's Map

It is too much to say that the administration and those who cover it have no sense of history. Rather, their view of American history is like the famous Saul Steinberg map of the world that once ran on the cover of *The New Yorker*, in which the distance between Fifth Avenue and the Hudson River amounts to about half the total land mass, while thin, pale strips marked "Kansas" and "Russia" are dimly visible in the rear. If Steinberg drew the administration's map of relevant history, it would consist of two great hulks, one marked "Vietnam War," and the other "The Mistakes of Richard Nixon." Barely visible in the background, at least since Carter's rating in the polls began to fall, would be a small promontory, marked "Truman's Come-from-Behind Victory in 1948." All else would be lost in the fog.

This is a history of labels, not reasons. If an action could be called "another Vietnam," it must be avoided, and if Richard Nixon had done something, it must not be done again, even if it might make sense in other circumstances and with different men in charge. As Lyndon Johnson feared Munich, so this administration has loathed Richard Nixon and has been determined to do nothing that would

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appear to take a leaf from his book. As Hamilton Jordan told the *National Journal* shortly after he became chief of staff, "We came here aware of the excesses of the Nixon administration and didn't want to duplicate them."

While there is much in Nixon's record to justify this approach, such automatic rejection has cost President Carter a great deal—including almost losing him the 1976 election. For better or worse, Richard Nixon did figure out how to run a general election campaign in the television era. He knew that, in the two or three months between convention and election, you no longer had to worry about making news, as you did during the primaries. You were going to get all the news you could handle, the most important of which was the two minutes on the network news each night. Your object was to make those two minutes turn out right, to get as much of your own material across as possible with the minimum of distraction. You knew that reporters are obliged to fill that two minutes with your actions each day, but that they'd snap up signs of blunders or arguments if you gave them half a chance.

Knowing these things, you would run a campaign just as Nixon did. You would give one big speech a day to put out your message—and you'd do it no later than early afternoon, in plenty of time for the evening news. Then you'd do nothing else—nothing, since every event increased the danger of its tripping over your own news, making a mistake, or giving the correspondents too much choice about what to use. You wouldn't give interviews promiscuously, or speak off-the-cuff, or make any unnecessary noise. The people whose town you were visiting might complain, and there would be occasional press snipings about "managing the news." But these would be dwarfed by your success—like Nixon's in 1972—in getting your points across. I hated to see Nixon's approach work that year, but that did not change the fact of its effectiveness, any more than the cause the Panzer divisions defended disproves the lessons of the Blitzkrieg approach.

This was not the way the Carter campaign read recent history. To them, the relevant lessons were, above all else, to avoid doing what Nixon had done, and to stick with the secret of their phenomenal success in winning the nomination—a campaign style based on making news rather than controlling it, and on making personal contact, through endless speeches, town meetings, and rallies, with the largest possible number of voters. The circumstances were different—in a primary, you could visit enough towns and give enough speeches to physically *see* a significant number of voters, but in a general election you could not and had to rely on TV—but Carter stuck to the same approach. He would make one big speech, but sometimes it would be at nine in the morning and sometimes at nine at night. Whenever it came, it was accompanied by five other pronouncements and performances during the day—brief remarks, impromptu interviews, the "accessibility" and "openness" that were to be Carter's trademarks. As human traits, these were more appealing than Nixon's isolation, but as a matter of political salesmanship it nearly lost the election. Whenever someone stuck a microphone near Carter's mouth and asked him a question, he would get an answer—and since those answers were often so much more juicy than the points Carter wanted to make, they dominated the two minutes on the news. For days and days reporters kept asking—and Carter kept answering—questions about the *Playboy* interview. Partly as a result, that interview was covered to death, while Carter was able to deliver one speech on inflation, in virtually unchanged form, three different times without any detectable coverage.

In fairness, Carter would probably have been burned by the press if he'd tried anything else, for many of the working reporters shared his view of the recent past. If he'd changed his campaign style, there would have been stories that he was acting "like Nixon." In the summer of 1978 the President took steps toward a more orderly way

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of getting his message across, and brought in Gerald Rafshoon to be in charge. The immediate press reaction was that this was Nixon-like (and therefore detestable) management of the news. Shortly after Rafshoon's arrival, I was interrogated by a friend from one of the networks. Wasn't this just like Nixon, he asked again and again, this clamping down on the communications business? This plan to coordinate and clear announcements? To have people speak with one voice, to advance the company line? Maybe it was like Nixon and maybe it wasn't; in either case, it made sense and needed to be done, and would have been done earlier had there been more determination in the Carter White House to read the history of the office.

The Handicapped Press

For most politicians and reporters, ignorance of the history of government springs from a lack of interest in the *substance* of government, as opposed to its politics. There are very few areas of substantive government policy where reporters possess either the sense of urgency or the feeling of expertise that would enable them to make their own judgments, rather than quoting the opinions of contending experts.

Near the end of July, for example, shortly after President Carter went on television to discuss his energy plan, Senator Edward Kennedy held a press conference to describe an energy program of his own. The major newspapers assigned their crack political reporters, who covered the announcement as yet another warm-up to the 1980 election. "KENNEDY OFFERS $58-BILLION ENERGY PLAN AS PROSPECT FOR 1980 ELECTION SEEMS LIKELIER," was the headline in *The Wall Street Journal.* Twelve of the 15 paragraphs in that story were devoted to handicapping the next election, and the other three to the plan itself—a ratio similar to that in many other papers.

In choosing such a slant for their coverage, the papers may have done justice to the story that both the Kennedy and Carter camps saw. But from the public point of view, even for those of us in the public abundantly interested in the election, there was a more important story to be done—or started—that day. It was a story that would compare the two plans, seriously appraise their consequences, dig out the differences between them and the alternatives that exist. In the end, it might be a more profoundly "political" form of coverage; for, unlike another recap of developments in the Iowa caucuses, it would give us more information on which to base our choice between the men.

When it comes to Iowa caucus stories, of course, any good political reporter would laugh at a colleague who interviewed each side's campaign manager and thought he'd told all there was to tell. The expert political reporter would want to get out there and see for himself, talk to the voters, make judgments about how the candidates come across. These are the tools of appraisal, and they are applied far more often to poll-and-precinct stories than, say, to judging the worth of Kennedy's energy plan. That is because election news is one of only four areas in which most reporters feel confident to use their powers to observe, inquire, and appraise.

The first of these areas embraces anything suggesting indictable criminal scandal. The regulars of the White House press room, aware that they had been burned by accepting Nixon's protestations of innocence too quickly, will not let another potential scandal go unexamined—nor will any ambitious young reporter, aware how life has changed for the Messrs. Woodward and Bernstein. Little "judgment" is required here, because of the underlying faith that the standard of criminality will be clear. With enough digging, the reporters feel, they may turn up the incriminating photo, the signed document, the smoking gun. Such expectations—so necessary in the courtroom, so misleading in understanding real political life—were in-

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creased by Watergate, where, contrary to the whole human history of high-level scheming, the smoking gun actually appeared.

But to understand why houses cost so much and cities are so run down, it may be ten times as important to dig out the facts that would permit an appraisal of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, than to know about the personal finances of Moon Landrieu. But the Landrieu story raises hopes of a scandal; and ten times as much energy will be spent there.

The second area includes stories of dissension, internal rivalry, unhappy passengers rocking the boat. This is why Midge Costanza became the most famous member of the Carter administration during its first year, and why Andrew Young was continually in the news. It is also why the first test of loyalty within an administration is to avoid making comments that could prop up an "internal dissent" story. If Vance disagrees with Brzezinski, reporters will quote each party's complaints about the other side's approach. But as long as an administration manages to present a publicly united front, reporters will hesitate to draw the same harsh conclusions for themselves.

The third area is the gaffe, whose substance matters less than the fact that an error has been made. No one aware of the history of the Republican party or of Gerald Ford's mainstream anti-communism could have mistaken his "Poland is free" comment in the campaign debates as anything more than an unfortunate slip of the tongue. What he was trying to say, as anyone could figure out, was that the Poles were proud and independent and didn't go around stressing their bondage to the East. At the outside, this might have been one more bit of evidence that Ford was not always on his toes. But the debates were seen as zero-gaffe contests, and therefore Ford "lost" this one big. For nearly two weeks afterwards, the Carter campaign reveled in (and encouraged) lurid coverage of the blunder. From Hamtramck to Buffalo, network reporters interviewed Polish-Americans-in-the-street and asked, in apparent seriousness, whether they were now more concerned about the administration's commitment to the Captive Nations.

A little more than a year later, Carter went to Warsaw and had his own Polish gaffe. The "mistakes" of the Polish translator were more modest than reported at the time. I got a copy of the Polish transcriptions of his remarks, spoke with Slavic experts, and learned that the worst reading of his worst mistake was nowhere near as glaring as what was reported at the time. The key sentence said in English, "I have come here to understand your desires for the future." If the English word "desire" has dual connotations, so does the Polish word (*pozadania*) the translator used, even though it is much more heavily weighted toward the carnal. But the translator never came close to saying what nearly all American papers reported—"I lust after the Poles," or "I desire you carnally"—and the whole episode was simply silly, since it made no dent in Polish-American relations or the business the President had come to transact. But the unfortunate translator dominated news out of Poland and was pushed off the front page only by the next gaffe on the trip, when President Carter and Secretary Vance were overheard in India making unfavorable comments about their hosts.

Fourth, there is politics, the business of winning elections and gaining points in the polls. Reporters will apply their finest analyses and put their judgments on the line to tell you whether the Connally campaign is picking up or flagging and whether Jimmy Carter really has a chance. Washington journalism boasts three dozen men and women who can tell you with authority, and with hard-won facts, *how* any politician is doing—in his local campaign organizations, in working the crowd, in buttering up the Congress, in staying ahead of the popular trend. The analyses are acute; the judgments superb. Like other people in Washing-

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ton, I read these stories first when I open the paper. We all love a horse race. All they leave out is the *what*—what he's saying, what happened when that approach was tried before, what effect this proposal will have on the permanent culture of the government or the national culture outside.

The *what* is missing because most reporters still lack either the interest or the confidence to judge the substance of government as acutely as they judge politics. In place of appraisal, there is quotation—we get quotes pro and con on each great national issue of the day. In theory, this is supposed to equip us to draw our own conclusions; in practice, it denies us the crucial facts necessary for judgment, as would a political story that simply quoted each candidate as saying, "My opponent is a liar; I am going to win."

When Jimmy Carter's attacks on the bureaucracy during his campaign won such widespread approval, they raised a hopeful possibility: if elected, Carter might be able to harness some popular pizzazz to the single most enduring problem of government. As it turned out, Carter was not ready for that step. But neither were the reporters. The subtleties of the problem—the grade inflation in the civil service, the way bad news and honest evaluation got filtered out as it moved up the organization, the desire for security that dwarfed all other passions—these things were not part of the reporters' lore, although their analogies from campaign culture would be. When Carter announced a civil service reform bill, the political side of the story was dutifully covered—who would carry Carter's water in the Congress, what the feedback was "beyond the beltway." The other side of the story—the likely effect of the proposal when it encountered the bureaucratic culture—was covered not at all. Most stories matched predictable quotes from administration officials—"we're going to put the work ethic back in the civil service"—with equally predictable and unenlightening opposition from the leaders of government unions. The real story to be told was that an administration had come in promising to change things from top to bottom, and so far had made precious little difference in any part of the government's operation. This is a judgment that could not come from quotes, but only from understanding the federal system well enough and going out to see what had and had not changed.

Other reorganization proposals were dutifully covered when the administration put out press releases, and ignored at other times. Nine times out of ten, the stories would be built around an interview with the administration's reorganization experts or with their critics on the Hill. If there were any stories by reporters who spent time trying to understand the agency being reorganized, so that they could judge the effects of the plans being proposed, I never saw them, and I was looking every day. As the administration's hope for reorganization grew smaller, the stream of press releases dwindled away, and so did coverage of the subject. It will lie dormant until early next year, when the first Republican candidate denounces President Carter for his failure to carry out his campaign promises. Then reorganization will again deserve sharp-eyed coverage as a live, *political* story.

The failure is not one of energy or good intentions; reporters can be tireless when on the trail of a scandal, a gaffe, or a bit of political news. Rather it is a question of understanding where to look—knowing that they will learn more about government reorganization interviewing two dozen normal GS-15s than by talking with reorganization officials, that they will be better equipped to appraise health plans if they spend time at hospitals and clinics than by listening to Joe Califano's speeches. And while administration officials might phone a friendly reporter with a tip about a new political story, they are as unlikely to suggest these bureaucratic angles as the reporters are to pursue them. During my brief time in the government, I saw considerable effort to figure out how to sell proposals to the Congress or present

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them to the public. Never did I see a glimmer of interest from those on top in figuring out the nature of the government they hoped to control. Jack Germond and Hamilton Jordan may look on each other as creatures of opposite cultures, with opposite loyalties, on different sides of the fence. But in the most important way they are the same: intelligent pros, gifted handicappers, in love with the skill and detail of politics and faintly interested in anything else.

Unwilling to make judgments about the substance of government, White House reporters permit the government to control the topic of serious news, while the reporters control the treatment and tone. Over drinks, at slow moments on the beat, White House reporters complain bitterly about their status as the press room's trained seals. They describe how confining it all is, how little their editors understand the pointlessness of the beat, how they detest waiting in the press room for Jody Powell to appear with the day's release. Nonetheless, if you listened to Powell make his morning announcement, you knew—barring scandal or gaffe—what the lead would be on the evening news that night. Within the White House, weekly summaries of the President's schedule were prepared; for each day, they listed what the likely "news event" would be. Under normal circumstances, that prediction almost always came true; if the President was making an announcement about the U.S. Forest Service, the Forest Service would get one day's news—and would not be in the news again until another announcement was planned.

But after accepting the government's chosen topic, the reporters treat it in their own chosen way, with reflexive cynicism about the administration's plans. The true lesson of Watergate is the value of hard digging, not only into scandal but everywhere else. The *perceived* lesson of Watergate in the White House press room is the Dan Rather lesson, that a surly attitude can take the place of facts or intelligent analysis. More and more often at the President's press conferences, one sees reporters proving their tough-mindedness by asking insulting questions; in the daily briefings with Powell, open snarling became the norm long ago. TV correspondents feel they've paid homage to the shade of Bob Woodward by ending their reports not with intelligent criticism but with a sophomoric twist. "The administration says its plans will work but the true result is *still to be seen.* Dan Daring, NBC News, the White House." Several days after the rabbit-bites-president joke, Leslie Stahl ended a report in the same mock-significant tone: "The President certified that his version of the story is true, but the White House has *still not produced the picture.* Leslie Stahl, CBS News, at the White House."

I suppose no surfeit of rabbit stories can do us permanent harm; I suspect we will survive yet another onslaught of politicians who want nothing more than to win an election, and reporters who describe little more than how they won. The real cause for desperation is that we may be getting exactly the sort of leadership and information we deserve. If our politicians are agendaless men, it may be because so few people have educated themselves to know what they want done. If our "leaders" show no inclination to build on lessons of the past, it may be because no one else in the country does either. If the newspapers and TV proclaim cabinet changes and policy strains as startling bolts from the blue, it is probably because they, like the people who learn from them, imagine that the world of public life is created anew each day, or at most every four years.

Some people lament the decline of the teaching profession and the neglect of history in the schools. I have not been near enough to a school recently to know, and I am always suspicious of things-used-to-be-better analyses, which have been a constant of adult lament since the time of Plato. But in order to think that such profound ignorance is a peril it is not necessary to argue that it was ever any different, only that it cripples us today. ■

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China at Eye-Level: Stripping Away the Stereotypes While There's Still Time

by Thomas N. Bethell

photographs by the author

The train moves gracefully past the soft green fields of southern China. The land is lovely to behold, and the windows are clean; the seats adjust easily to face forward, aft, or directly out the window; big blue oscillating ceiling fans move the air efficiently; a brisk young woman patrols the aisle with a kettle, serving green tea. Oh to be in China, riding on a train!

I went to China for three weeks earlier this year—and I can see you now, sighing and getting ready to turn the page. I don't blame you. I know all about people who are just back from China. They have dozens of slides of the Great Wall, they can speak with authority on the history of the Forbidden City, they understand the Four Modernizations and will explain them without provocation. They have seen acupuncture and swear by it, they have tasted Peking Duck on its home turf and will accept no substitutes in Georgetown.

Me, I'm a fanatic on Chinese passenger trains—but that's not what I want to write about here, except to point out their obvious virtue: through their windows, it is possible to look at China at eye level—and that is a perspective which very few Americans have ever had.

Some of us have looked down; we were appalled by what we perceived as the backwardness of the Chinese, and enthralled by the prospect of remodeling them in our own image. That attitude gave us a bad case of Missionary Zeal, and it came a cropper 30 years ago, but I'm not sure we're cured of it altogether.

Some others of us looked down in a very different way, seeing China primarily as the world's largest market—the last great frontier for Free Enterprise. We sold the Chinese opium a century ago; times change, and today we see them as suitable subjects for Coca-Colanization.

Others of us have looked *up* at the Chinese, seeing them as stalwart standard-bearers blazing a trail to Utopia—a great army of barefoot doctors, emancipated women, and smiling children all following the Great Helmsman toward a brighter shore. Over the years several well-meaning friends have tried to explain this perspective to me, with the same effect as Sominex.

Some others of us, looking upward through a different prism, have seen

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Chinese vacationers in Peking, looking at American vacationers in Peking looking at Chinese...

the Chinese looming tall and evil, blotting out the sun and linking arms with the Russians in single-minded dedication to our eradication. This view suffered a serious loss of credibility some years ago when it became obvious that the Chinese and the Russians regard each other with deep apprehension, but long before that time we had built a wall so high that we could not see that; we could not see China at all for a quarter of a century, and in our blindness we blundered into Vietnam, largely in fear of what China might be up to.

The skewing of the average man's view of China was a massive job, undertaken over the years by a legion of politicians and military men, missionaries and merchants, bankers and writers and teachers. But it seems fair to say that no one ever erected more obstacles to clear vision than did Henry Robinson Luce.

Bound in pale green and gathering dust, the old copies of *Time* seem benign now, even quaint. And Henry Luce has been safely in the grave for a dozen years, having left behind an organization of such overwhelming respectability that his successor, Hedley Donovan, could be called upon to give artificial respiration to Jimmy Carter without stirring so much as a murmur of apprehension in the land. It was not always so.

Born in China in 1898, the son of a missionary, Luce became a missionary himself—but with a difference. He had printing presses instead of a pulpit, and for more than 20 years those presses proselytized ceaselessly on behalf of Chiang Kai-Shek, the Nationalist warlord, who, upon converting to Christianity, became in Luce's eyes the sole legitimate leader of China.

As it happened, this was a view at wide variance with the facts. Over the years, Chiang's government became encrusted with corruption and immobilized by indecision—an early version of other governments we would later support in Saigon, Havana, Tehran, Santiago, Managua, and on and on. There were observers in China who saw the situation for what it was, but they lacked Luce's capacity to propagandize.

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In an early stage of farm mechanization, a truck carries produce at dawn to market in Wuxi.

Lucewords

The scope and the scale of that propaganda are hard to appreciate today. Remember that this was before television, when the power of print was at its apogee. No one knew how to manipulate that power more shrewdly than Luce, and through the critical period when China was suffering the sustained upheaval that would lead to Chiang's final downfall in 1949, Luce's publishing empire was second to none: *Time, Life, Fortune,* "March of Time" on the radio, reaching 20 million people a week, "March of Time" newsreels playing in 10,000 movie theaters across America day in and day out.

Through that vast information empire the name of Chiang remained sacred, on the direct orders of the boss. In Lucewords, he was "thoroughly modern... businesslike... unmistakably commanding... a mighty hero... a conqueror of dominating mien... the great soldier-statesman... unquestionably the greatest man in the Far East.... The Great Chiang, say his farmer soldiers, sits like a mountain, moves like a dragon, and walks with the sure step of a tiger."

Luce dismissed Chiang's opponents, the Communist armies of Mao Tse-Tung, as "bandit hordes." Their battles with Chiang were "less significant than a Chicago gang war," and Chiang "uses them as a football coach uses a scrub team—to train the regular army."

Even when the scrub team pushed the regular army into the sea, Luce maintained faith. By 1951, he was reporting that "Red China is in deep trouble. Early enthusiasm for the Red regime has turned to sullen resentment, distrust, and despair.... Mao is aging (59) and ailing (heart trouble), is obviously unable to wield as much personal power as he once had." In 1952, in one of his periodic "guidance memos" to his editors, Luce laid out the back-to-the-mainland line: "After Chiang has landed and maintained himself for three months on the mainland, the Communist menace in Asia will be finished and the whole of Asia will turn anti-Communist." Luce held to this absurd hope for a dozen years, and while it is easy to ridicule him now, it must also be remembered that his "guidance" propelled not only his editors but the shapers of public policy as well.

Theodore White, who worked for Luce, warned his boss that *Time* had become nothing more than "a Chiang house organ" and quit in protest. Other Luce stars gagged and got out. It didn't matter. Week after week, year after year, the great presses sent waves of vitriol rolling across America, disguised as news. In that suffocating climate, political accommodation became impossible.

We know now, for example, that Mao offered to come to Washington in 1945 to meet Roosevelt in hopes of weaning the U.S. away from its blind devotion to Chiang. *Offer rejected.*

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We know now that as late as 1949, Chou En-Lai suggested that U.S. economic aid might be made available to an independent Communist China on the same basis that it was being made available to an independent Communist Yugoslavia. After his bold break with Stalin in 1948, Tito had become our hero-of-the-hour; Chou, with some subtlety, seemed to be communicating Mao's willingness to follow the same path, given the right conditions. We ignored him—*message received, filed without reply.*

We know now that Stalin and Mao viewed each other with profound distrust, that there was in fact no unity between the two until we virtually forced the Chinese to turn to the Russians for economic aid. We had skilled China-watchers at the State Department, laying out the facts—but we weren't interested in facts.

Facts challenged the conventional wisdom which Henry Luce articulated so forcefully. And so we were treated to sages like Dean Rusk, then under-secretary of State, telling a *Time*-sponsored conference in 1951 that Mao had established nothing more than "a colonial Russian government. . . . It is not the government of China. It does not pass the first test. It is not Chinese."

This great Sinologist would later become a principal architect of our Vietnam strategy, carrying his blinding insights with him all the way to ignominy.

Meanwhile, the wall between us and China went up and stayed up; on our side we muttered about nuking the Commies, on their side they marched through the streets of Peking shouting threats of revenge. We met on the battlefields of Korea; we know now that they came into that conflict largely in fear that General MacArthur was going to invade China, an idea not far from the front of his mind.

There were times, even when the wall was at its most impregnable, when efforts were made to breach it. In Geneva in 1954 Chou En-Lai held out his hand to John Foster Dulles (a frequent contributor to *Life*), and Dulles refused to shake it. In Bandung the next year Chou proclaimed China's willingness to co-exist peacefully with the United States; Dulles and *Time* dismissed him as "The Great Dissembler." In 1958 Mao offered to let American reporters into China—and Dulles refused to issue them passports.

It's not good to repeat old mistakes, but people and nations have a habit of doing it anyway. There is a purpose to hauling Henry Luce back from the grave for a moment, if only to scrutinize again the tendency of those in charge of society to think they have the capital-A Answers, and to commit wretched excesses in the name of conventional wisdom.

Not that we are about to launch another campaign of vilification against the Chinese. On the contrary, this time it appears that we're prepared to kill them with our own special brand of kindness.

The conventional view now is that China is an essentially friendly country being led by pragmatic men in the general direction of Enlightenment, as we think we understand the term. But when all the rhetoric falls away, this vision seems to strip down to three familiar concepts: that China is a splendid new stomping ground for tourists, a potentially valuable ally in our twilight struggle with the Russians, and a whopping great outlet for the giants of American industry and banking.

If Henry Luce weren't already dead, he'd keel over at what *Time* has been saying about China lately. The Four Modernizations (upgrading agriculture, industry, science and technology, and the military) represent, according to *Time*, "an extraordinary spectacle of national ambition." The stage manager of this epic, Deng Xiaoping, has "extraordinary energy and executive skills. . . a moral authority that no other Chinese can command." He is, says *Time*, "tough, abrasive, resilient. . . a flexible realist. . . tough as a walnut." Looking into his past, *Time* says Deng "helped set up a highly effective guerrilla force against the Japanese," which just goes to show

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that even a member of the scrub team can make the varsity if he waits long enough for a change in the coaching staff. Apparently oblivious to its own irony, *Time* now reports with approval that Americans are abandoning their view of the Chinese as "a menacing ant-people in quilted jackets."

From Luce to Rockefeller

This sweeping change of heart is good fun, and not without great mutual benefit, but it did not just *happen,* and our new spirit of camaraderie is not without its ulterior motives. As for the thread that connects two generations of conventional wisdom, if you follow the filament from Henry Luce you find David Rockefeller at the other end.

At the risk of belaboring an obvious point, the Establishment should be given due credit for learning from its mistakes. In places like Southeast Asia it learns slowly, and many people who have never even heard of it die while it learns, but it learns. As it watched China beginning to negotiate trade agreements with other nations, the American Establishment figured out that it ought to get on board while the train was still in the station. It does not like to look foolish, running madly down the tracks trying to catch an accelerating train while the Germans and Japanese wave cheerfully from the parlor car. That could have happened in China, and nearly did.

Pragmatic people in the world of high finance have had an eye on China for a long time, for obvious reasons. Even the most xenophobic of governments would sooner or later be forced to embark on a major, sustained economic development program. There had been some Soviet-style efforts and the Great Leap Forward, in 1958, but these had at most moved China forward in increments rather than leaps. And any country attempting to uplift a billion people would need capital on an almost unheard-of scale. When China wanted the money, the Germans and Japanese would be ready—and were. But American bankers, hobbled by our commitment to Taiwan, had no lines open.

We tend to think of rapprochement with China as having begun when Richard Nixon found himself atop the Great Wall in 1972, telling his hosts that a people who could build a wall so great must be great themselves. But of course he had been preceded by Henry Kissinger and a ping-pong team in 1971, the same year in which the United Nations General Assembly finally overrode American opposition and voted to seat the People's Republic of China. The history books reflect these developments, but they do not mention that by 1971 the Chase Manhattan Bank, a.k.a. David Rockefeller, was already well along on its own process of normalization with China.

"Private citizens are often able to act with greater flexibility than governments in the search for new and better forms of international cooperation," Rockefeller has observed, not bothering to amplify on another important point: that governments are also more accountable for their actions. The search for new and better forms of international cooperation led Rockefeller in 1970 to begin planning a new division at Chase headquarters in New York. The people who worked in it spoke Chinese. They studied the intricacies of negotiating with Peking. The bank's files were already full of interesting information, although much of it was old—Chase had had a branch in Shanghai from 1921 until 1949.

Rockefeller also established Chase Pacific Trade Advisors, Inc., a subsidiary designed to broker trade agreements for American clients. "At the time, of course, we couldn't negotiate anything, because we didn't recognize China," a former Chase officer recalls. "Some of us thought Mr. Rockefeller was a bit daft. But then, in rapid succession, there was the table-tennis visit, and Kissinger's trip, and the American decision not to oppose China any longer for admission to the U.N., and we realized that Mr. Rocke-

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feller was still in full possession of his senses."

And he was at least a full step ahead of the pack. By the time the United States and China had agreed to establish liaison offices in Washington and Peking, in May 1973, a Rockefeller-sponsored organization called the National Council for U.S.-China Trade had already set up shop in a suite of offices in Washington. The State Department described it euphemistically as "a nonprofit, private organization maintaining close liaison with the U.S. government." Its function? "The Council serves as a forum for the discussion of trade policy and issues."

The Council was much more than that. Prior to normalization at the beginning of this year, the Council provided the only way for an American businessman to establish official contact with Peking. The only place where you could find authoritative facts and figures on the trade situation was in the pages of the monthly *China Business Review*—published by the Council. According to sources at the Council, most of the data came directly from the PRC division at Chase. When the Chinese decided to get into building tourist hotels American-style on a grand scale, they went to the Council, and Chase quietly made $30 million available to get the project off the ground. In the confusion of getting the liaison offices organized in 1973, hardly anyone noticed when David Rockefeller himself visited China to set up a "correspondent relationship" with the Bank of China, which handles all foreign trade transactions for Peking.

All this careful planning paid dividends for Chase. Deng Xiaoping today speaks of David Rockefeller as "a special friend of China"—a special irony when you recall that the Rockefellers' Standard Oil Company was the dominant American presence in China during the days of Chiang Kai-Shek, as friendly to the Chinese as the United Fruit Company was to Latin America. In the wild scramble to get a piece of the Four Modernizations, Chase has been given special treatment. Until April of this year, American firms had been refused permission to open permanent offices in Peking; by the time the ban was lifted, more than 150 companies were wait-listed. Chase Pacific Trade Advisors was the first to be approved and now has offices in the Peking Hotel, the most coveted spot in town. As for Chase Manhattan Bank, it expects to open its new Peking branch around the first of the year—the first American bank permitted to operate in China since 1949.

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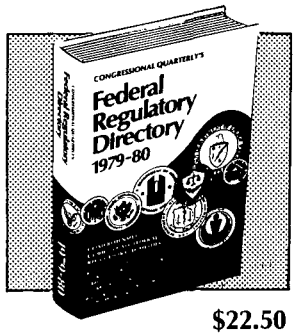

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'Unrepentant Capitalist-Roader'

All this speaks well, no doubt, of the Establishment's capacity to change, as it speaks well of the fabled Rockefeller entrepreneurial spirit. Those who feel apprehensive about American businessmen baring their teeth in wide smiles of friendship also have to keep in mind that the Chinese know a thing or two about that, and presumably can be expected to look after themselves.

That's an argument with some weight. On the other hand, by now we

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should have had enough experience with unstable governments and large, unaccountable multinational companies to look at the emerging Sino-American Alliance, and the new conventional wisdom on China, with some skepticism.

We should, at the very least, be acutely aware that China's internal political situation is still volatile and still largely a mystery to us—as some veteran Sinologists like John Fairbank are the first to admit.

When the Great Leap Forward failed, Mao frankly acknowledged that "I am a complete outsider when it comes to economic construction, and I understand nothing about industrial planning." But since he was also the biggest kid on the block, he kept right on kicking sand in the faces of his critics. At unpredictable intervals over the past three decades, China has swung wildly between heavyhanded Soviet-style central planning, with its emphasis on massive works projects, and Mao-style decentralization, with its experiments in such things as backyard smelters and periodic efforts to shake up the bureaucracy.

Deng Xiaoping, who sums up his philosophy by arguing that it doesn't matter whether a cat is black or white as long as it catches mice, has always pushed development of China's basic industries. We like that—we see him as a good old boy, somebody we can deal with. But in the 1950s his devotion to strong central planning got him crosswise with Mao and he found himself purged. He regained credibility after the failure of the Leap, only to be purged again during the misnamed Cultural Revolution in 1966, when the Red Guards turned China upside down as they tried to teach the intellectuals and the technocrats a lesson. Deng survived only to be purged a third time in 1976, during the struggle for power after the death of his mentor, Chou En-Lai; to the unlamented Gang of Four, he was "an arch unrepentant capitalist-roader and behind-the-scenes promoter of the right deviationist wing to reverse correct verdicts."

We would like to believe that the wild gyrations are over in China—along with the elephantine phrase-making that inevitably accompanies them—but the harsh fact is that we don't know. Deng may be, as *Newsweek* claims, "the most popular man in China," but in three weeks and six cities I never once saw a picture of him on display, a fact that may be of great significance, some significance, or no significance at all. (From talking with our guides and other English-speaking Chinese, I got the impression that he is regarded with respect but not with anything like the kind of affection that people profess to feel for Chou.)

It's not surprising that we throw our weight behind the people in China who are interested primarily in urban industrial development and mechanization—that's *our* kind of development. But we have trouble coping with the overriding fact of China's economic existence, which is that it is a country where four-fifths of the people still live on the land and work it without benefit of mechanization, as we understand the term. If this were to change rapidly—if China were to shift heavily toward a preponderance of development in urban industries, and to widespread mechanization of agriculture in pursuit of higher crop yields—it isn't hard to imagine another political cataclysm developing rapidly.

China functions as a full-employment economy, but the term needs close scrutiny. The Chinese provide work for everyone by deliberately sanctioning inefficiency on a scale completely foreign to American managers. If this system is changed, all hell could break loose in a country where every year there are 17 million more mouths to feed.

China and the United States produce roughly the same annual grain tonnage, but we do it with about three per cent of our total national work force, the Chinese with about 80 per cent of theirs. We have four-and-a-half million tractors, most of them big; the Chinese have only a quarter of a million, most of them small.

To the American mind, this suggests a ready market for mechanization.

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Farming by hand. This man would be obsolete in America—and may be soon in China, with our help.

Within three weeks after normalization this year, securities analysts in New York were pumping out bulletins about companies well-placed to clean up in The China Trade. Names that came up often included John Deere, Caterpillar, International Harvester, Massey Ferguson, DeKalb AgResearch, and Monsanto. China is the "last frontier," wrote John Groome, research director at Schroder, Naess & Thomas, in a bulletin predicting that Chinese purchases could be the "springboard" to "a sustainable bull market" at home.

So there they are—still spreading the night soil by hand, ready and waiting for high-yield fertilizers, pesticides, bodacious tractors, *productivity*. What about all those people who would be displaced? Well, hell, that's not *our* responsibility, is it?

Maybe, maybe not. Sifting through the news from Peking this year, one finds plenty of items that suggest that the Chinese haven't figured out which way to go—or how far. Our bankers and businessmen continue plying them with all kinds of attractive deals (within the first four months after normalization, China had borrowed more than $1.4 *billion* from American commercial banks alone), deals which must be mouth-watering to planners like Deng who have been waiting so long to put the spurs to China's economy. But the country still has to figure out what to do with all those *people*. That requires, at the very least, a closely coordinated national planning apparatus—at a time when China suffers from a terrible shortage of qualified technical, administrative, and managerial people.

The country is only beginning to recover from the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath, which left the country's schools and universities in shambles. From 1966 to 1976, 15 million Chinese were uprooted and shipped off to the countryside. Those events left scars detectable even to tourists—most obviously, a certain weariness and cynicism, seemingly widespread and understandably so.

The Baby And The Bathwater

The impetus for the Cultural Revolution was logical enough; Mao was trying, as he did periodically, to blast Chinese society free from the suffocating weight of its massive bureaucratic apparatus. But the effect was to throw the baby out with the bathwater—to alienate many of China's most able young men and women, leaving China today without the corps of skilled middle-level technicians and managers necessary to move the country along a reasonably predictable development curve.

Instead, China still has a stifling bureaucracy that almost certainly represents one of the most major challenges faced by Deng Xiaoping. The bureaucracy is to a visionary leader what fog is to the captain of a ship maneuvering among icebergs; to see China emerging is wondrously

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encouraging, but to assume that the process is inexorable is foolish, when history is full of evidence that the fog can close in again without warning.

We don't have the power to keep the Chinese from going through another dizzying cycle of purges and power struggles, but we don't have to pursue policies that are likely to increase the odds. If war is too important to leave to the generals, trade with China is too important to leave to the Fortune 500. Our political processes provide for far more scrutiny than we have been exercising; for our own sake, if not China's, we need to know much more than we do now about who is peddling what kinds of deals, with what kinds of ramifications.

We should be looking, for example, at a concept the Chinese euphemistically call "compensatory trade." This is a form of industrial barter: You give me the machinery I need to make widgets, and I will give you the widgets I produce. To the Chinese, strapped for up-front capital, this arrangement makes perfect sense, but at our end of the deal it is just one more variation on an old theme—the runaway shop.

When labor costs began to climb in New England a century ago, textile companies went to the South. Since then, they have lived like park pigeons, getting fat wherever they are but ready to move at the slightest disturbance. In pursuit of corporate tranquility, the companies have touched down in Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong; now they are heading for the People's Republic of China.

Prestige Sportswear of Boston and Oxford Industries of New York were the first American companies to sign "compensatory trade" pacts with the Chinese last November. Under these agreements, the American companies will ship garment-finishing equipment to China, and the Chinese will ship finished garments—women's dresses and pants and men's corduroy suits—to the United States, to be sold under American brand names (the country of origin will be identified, but not in very big type).

We are already a major market for Chinese textiles—last year, for example, they sold us 35 million pairs of cotton work gloves, 6.5 million women's blouses, and half a million sweaters—and it doesn't make sense to suggest that we should erect tariff barriers to that kind of trade. But it's a different situation when American companies in effect dismantle their plants here and set them up again in China to take advantage of cheap Chinese labor and working conditions far beyond the reach of OSHA and the EPA (our tour took us through a "model" silk-reeling factory from which my principal memories are heat, humidity, noise, dim lighting, bad ventilation, and the hot water in which women immerse their hands for eight hours a day at a wage equivalent to about $35 a month).

The "compensatory trade" ploy, whether it is in textiles or steel—both Bethlehem and U.S. Steel have agreed to build mills for the Chinese, rather than build new mills here and ship the Chinese the finished products—poses difficult questions for us to cope with. The specter, at its worst, is that in their eagerness to sell the Chinese some basic capital equipment, our businessmen may end up creating another, bigger Japan—a country equipped to compete with America world-wide but closed to the export of those goods America produces well and cheaply. It is, at the very least, a situation crying out for more information and more analysis, on the part of American labor unions, the press, the public in general, and the Congress.

Help From Big Oil

A second trade situation that we need to look at while there is still time—if there is—has to do with our own energy picture, and it involves our old friends, the oil companies.

In the general press there has been very little reporting about China's oil resources. *Energy Future*, the much-touted Harvard Business School report published this summer, dismisses China's oil fields with the

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offhand remark that "they are unlikely to make a substantial change in the world oil balance."

This does not square with what the Chinese believe. China is already the world's tenth largest oil producer, with a daily yield of roughly two million barrels—compared to practically zero in 1949. Moreover, the country's major existing oil fields are not yet producing to capacity, and the Chinese are only just now getting serious about developing their offshore resources.

In this project they have the eager assistance of some familiar names: Exxon, Mobil, Texaco, Atlantic-Richfield, Pennzoil, Santa Fe Industries, Occidental Petroleum, and Union Oil, among others. ARCO and Santa Fe jointly signed an agreement in March to do seismic studies and had three survey ships in place off the China coast by May; the agreement was cleared by Peking a couple of weeks after ARCO agreed to pick up the tab for the television coverage of Deng Xiaoping's visit to the United States—a $500,000 good-will gesture. Mobil signed a similar prospecting agreement soon after agreeing to underwrite a cultural exchange project in which the Boston Symphony Orchestra went to Peking.

Basic English. Next: words like "multinational," "cartel," "Exxon."

Whether these were "questionable payments," as the auditors would delicately say, is unclear. More important, however, is the fact that under these agreements the companies are sharing information with each other—but not with the rest of us. We will learn only what they choose to tell us.

Thoughtful analysts at the federal Bureau of Mines—a widely-ignored bureaucratic backwater now that most of its action has been preempted by the Department of Energy—believe that China's oil resources have been underrated and may be vast. If that turns out to be true, we are crazy to leave the oil companies playing there without adult supervision. This situation gives us, at minimum, one more reason to think seriously about setting up a federal oil-purchasing corporation that would be specifically charged with encouraging non-OPEC oil producers to bring their resources into production and would then buy oil at the best available prices, marketing it to U.S. consumers through independent companies by competitive bidding.

This would be "compensatory trade" of a very different kind—compensating the U.S. taxpayer directly for the costs of prospecting and development, rather than having the process manipulated by Exxon and its friends, all of whom have a vested interest in limiting production in order to maintain control of the supply-demand-price relationship.

The uncertain energy equation between the United States and China is further complicated by China's current strategy for meeting its own energy needs. Under the Four Modernizations plan, China is emphasizing rapid development of coal and hydroelectric power for domestic use in order to free

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up as much of its oil as possible for foreign trade. There is a certain obvious logic to this plan—but here again, American companies have quietly moved in, with consequences that have not yet become the subject of informed political discussion. A number of manufacturers have started selling significant quantities of mining equipment to the Chinese. That's a straight trade proposition, hard to quarrel with. Recently, however, Occidental Petroleum's ubiquitous 81-year-old chairman, Armand Hammer, slipped into Peking long enough to sign an agreement under which his subsidiary, Island Creek Coal, will directly develop and operate coal mines in China.

If you were one of the 25,000 miners in southern Appalachia currently laid off by the softness of the metallurgical and export markets for American coal, you might well be concerned with what Armand is up to. You might even think, for example, that idle American mines could be shipping coal to China this very day, in exchange for their oil—a fuel-for-fuel swap. Now that *would* be compensatory trade, and it might significantly ease our own oil-based energy squeeze, for a few years at any rate—perhaps even enough to call into question our plans for vast taxpayer-subsidized synthetic fuels plants.

There are problems with this idea, not the least of which is the moral question of whether we should try to fob off on the Chinese the environmental problems of burning coal that we have been unable to resolve ourselves. Coal-for-oil might turn out to be a far-fetched idea. Or it might not. The only sure thing is that it will not be discussed at all as long as the American public is effectively left out of the wheeling and dealing.

These are disturbing examples of the kinds of developments already taking place now that China has our Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval again. But they are only examples; they only scratch the surface; and they are as ominous in their implications as the befuddled views of Henry Luce were in years past.

It may be wishful thinking to hope that we can learn to look at China, finally, at eye level—neither as an object of fear nor as an object of mercantile lust—and that we can keep our relationships with the Chinese under the spotlight of public scrutiny. But we have tried it the other way before, and we should try to remember where it got us. David Rockefeller may be a hell of a banker, and old Armand Hammer may be a formidable industrialist, but we didn't elect either one of them to conduct our foreign policy, any more than we elected Henry Luce. ■

Daybreak, in a place where America seems very far away. But isn't.

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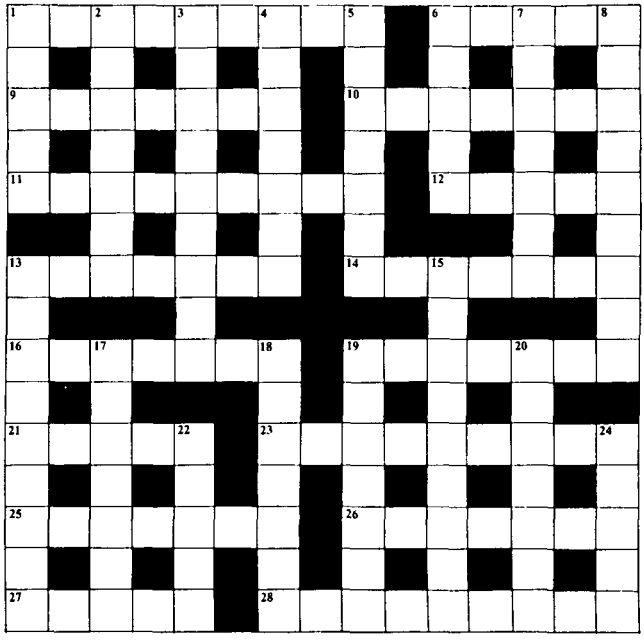
the political puzzle

by John Barclay



ACROSS

1. Any guy Don confused got in trouble at White House. (4,5)
6. Good for the rocket but bad for the worker? (5)
9. Put some in the fat for a cord. (7)
10. A plan in favor of going metric? (7)
11. Emphasized in rebuilt G.W. trailer. (4,5)
12. Bizarre nadir at the bottom. (5)
13. One site rebuilt to examine internally. (3,4)
14. String instrument from S.S. Maine. (7)
16. Collects choral works in a certain key? (7)
19. Impotent V.I.P.? (7)
21. Urge to find the limits of growing in a long time. (3,2)
23. Nine close changes for backtalk. . . (9)
25. . . . or brash arrangement protects. (7)
26. Perhaps the Pied Piper got his followers from City Hall? (7)
27. Lofty goal set by physical education star. (5)
28. Former country is dimmest in East. (9)

DOWN

1. Let in unusual lower berth. (5)
2. Ten dine around to put substance in mouth. (7)
3. Angry lies concocted for the young. (9)
4. Experience strangely, e.g., round. (7)
5. Rodents romp if you let crazy little President hog the show. (7)
6. Fifty in the provender is overwhelming. (5)
7. Studies again about strange dares. (7)
8. Mastery when I'm back in on in dance show. (9)
13. Pepsi cash transformed for interstellar travel. (9)
15. Metal suit horribly harms. (9)
17. Country made up by age-liar. (7)
18. Defies gravity to make mistake? (5,2)
19. Lion comes up a little street in making air passage. (7)
20. Indian made lane big. (7)
22. Nothing in an organ makes a snare. (5)
24. To follow in chicken suet combination. (5)

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g., (2,3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g., USA, are treated as one word.

Answers to last month's puzzle on page 40.

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The Tail and the Dog: How the Staff Wags Congress

by Rochelle Jones and Peter Woll

The average voter, and for that matter even the sophisticated voter, believes when he casts his vote for a candidate to the United States Senate that he is voting for a man who will make his constituents' concerns his own. At one time that was true, but it is no longer. Senators are only peripherally involved in representing their constituents. Senators continue to exercise the symbolic functions of their office. They introduce bills. They cast votes on the floor and in committee. They deliver speeches and read testimony. They attend social and political functions that require their presence. But the real work of the United States Senate is carried on by the staff. Lloyd Bentsen, an able and conscientious legislator who was president of a conglomerate insurance company before his election, once said, "In a state the size of Texas it's impossible to know everything that's going on there. All you can do is hire a good staff and trust that they'll tell you what you should know." It is the staff that drafts the bills and draws up amendments, writes the speeches and committee testimony, plots legislative strategy and occasionally recasts a malleable senator in its own image.

In the mid-1960s the consumer-protection movement was still in its infancy, and Senator Warren Magnuson of Washington, chairman of the Commerce Committee, had only a passing interest in consumer-oriented legislation. Magnuson, however, did have a strong interest in securing his Senate seat after a near defeat in 1962 and in consolidating his power in the Senate. Fortunately for Magnuson, he was gifted with a bright, young, and aggressive Commerce Committee staff who saw in the emerging consumer movement a way of accomplishing both of these ends. Led by Michael Pertschuk, who was later to become chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, the staff set out deliberately to stake out consumer-protection legislation for Magnuson and themselves. Under their tutelage Magnuson came to dominate a policy area of growing importance and public interest. With their guidance he became the Senate's expert on consumer protection and a nationally recognized leader in the consumer movement. And as one consequence among many of all this activity, he was regularly returned to Washington by the grateful voters back home.

Rochelle Jones is a Washington reporter. Peter Woll is a professor of politics at Brandeis University. *This article is excerpted by permission of Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., from* The Private World of Congress *by Rochelle Jones and Peter Woll.* © *1979* The Private World of Congress, *by Rochelle Jones and Peter Woll.*

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Early on, Magnuson's staff usurped the truth-in-packaging issue, which had been floating around the Senate in one legislative guise or another since 1961. It was Senator Philip Hart of Michigan who originally introduced a truth-in-packaging proposal. (Hart supposedly opened a box of cereal at breakfast one morning and, finding that it was half empty, said, "We've got to do something about this.") In 1966 Hart's truth-in-packaging legislation was suddenly reincarnated as Magnuson's Fair Packaging and Labeling Act. As chairman of the committee which claimed jurisdiction in this area, Magnuson was in a position to do something with the legislation. As Hart later told it:

"In fact, Maggie entered the picture at the right moment and in the right way to get the thing passed. A lot of opposition had been created. . . . So Magnuson's stepping in when he did probably saved the bill. After two or three executive sessions he called everybody together, including some boys from downtown, and hammered out a "substitute" bill. That it was supposedly a substitute and not merely an amended Hart bill made it a lot easier to get through. We lost some things, but by and large it was a good bill and much the same as mine. You know how Maggie can pull that sort of thing off, with his broad sweeping statements which everybody somehow accepts: 'This is a *new* bill!'" The "new bill," basically formulated by Hart but now bearing Magnuson's name, was passed into law later that year.

The legislation that eventually cleared the Congress was a watered-down version of the bill that had been reported out of the Commerce Committee. The staff, however, wasn't much worried about the details. They had what they wanted from the legislation. From their perspective the important thing was that a piece of consumer-protection legislation backed by Magnuson had become law. More meaningful legislation could come later. Furthermore, they were busy with other bills. That same year they were working on the Federal Cigarette Labeling and Advertising Act and the Traffic Safety Act, both important consumer-protection bills. Still to come was the whole panoply of consumer legislation that would be written into law in the late 1960s and 1970s. By that time the Commerce Committee staff had secured Magnuson's reputation as the natural and rightful champion of any and all bills in the consumer-protection area.

It Takes Two To Tango

The relationship between Magnuson and his staff was complex, as such relationships always are. Magnuson was not an unwitting dupe of activist staff members who manipulated their chairman for their own ends. Such an inference would be as inaccurate as it would be unfair, but it is true that Magnuson willingly went where his staff led him. Magnuson was flailing—and knew he was—in the mid-1960s and was receptive to the direction of his staff. Without Pertschuk and several other key staffers who were interested in consumer issues and who wanted to activate the committee, Magnuson would not have achieved his present preeminence in the consumer-protection area. The staff's influence was aptly summarized by a student of the Commerce Committee at that time: "Onto the old Magnuson, interested in fishing, shipping and Boeing Aircraft and running a rather sleepy committee, was grafted a new one: the champion of the consumer, the national legislative leader, and the patron of an energetic and innovative staff."

That particular staff coming to work at that time did something else which redounded to their credit, and Magnuson's as well. They turned the previously moribund Commerce Committee into a major power in the United States Senate. The staff wanted to turn the Commerce Committee and themselves into a force to be reckoned with. They could do that only if they pushed Magnuson as far as he was willing to go. There were invisible limits which

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had to be observed. If they exceeded them, all would be lost. So they pushed and pulled gently, but always in the direction of more activism for Magnuson, more power for the committee and, of course, its staff. And they succeeded. The committee, now renamed the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, has one of the largest staffs and was among the most powerful in the Senate in the 1970s. Other committees tread lightly in areas that infringe on the legislation and issues that the Commerce Committee claims, and when they become involved in these areas, they are sure, in the vernacular of the Hill, to touch base with the committee.

Not all senators who have been swept along by the trend toward larger, more aggressive staffs are entirely happy with it. The late Senator James Allen, an opponent of government growth at all levels, once remarked, "I feel the staff is doing the philosophizing and senators are too inclined to rubber-stamp." Allen once introduced amendments that would have banned staff members from the floor while the Senate was in session and would have forbidden the reading of prepared texts—that is, statements prepared by staffs—on the floor. The amendments were enough to damage Allen's reputation as a conservative, for both were profoundly radical notions in the Senate of the 1970s. Needless to say, the amendments were never voted on. If they had passed, a loud silence would have abruptly descended upon the Senate chamber.

Even senators who scramble for more aides are not entirely comfortable with the idea of burgeoning staffs. There is the gnawing feeling that the Senate may have created a Frankenstein's monster and the senators may have ended up the servants, not the masters, of their staffs. This constant badgering by staff leads some senators to seek refuge in the "Senators Only" room just off the chamber, where they disappear for hours, to the consternation of their aides. It also prompted Senator Ernest Hollings of South Carolina to say during a hearing on

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legislative branch appropriations, "There are many senators who feel that all they are doing is running around and responding to staff. . . . Everybody is working for staff, staff, staff, driving you nutty. . . . It has gotten to the point where the senators never actually sit down and exchange ideas and learn from the experience of others and listen. . . . Now it is how many nutty whiz kids you have on the staff to get you magazine articles and get you headlines and get all those other things done."

In their quest for power senators have permitted their days to become, in the words of the Commission on the Operation of the Senate, "a scheduler's nightmare." Committee hearings are necessary to demonstrate power, so more are held. Legislation is needed to prove expertise, so more bills are introduced. Articles and speeches prove status, so more are written and given. Staff accompanies power, so more are hired, and then, in a variant of Parkinson's law, the work expands further to occupy the people who are available to do it.

Nowhere is the pervasive influence of staff more visible than in committees and during roll-call votes on the Senate floor. Senators typically do not bother to attend a committee hearing unless they are supposed to be chairing it or the hearing is unusually important. When they do show up, they arrive on the run, casting frantic glances around the room for the aide who has been monitoring the hearing in their absence. While the senator's attention has been diverted elsewhere, the staff has studied the pros and cons of the legislation, drafted a statement to be read into the hearing record, and compiled questions to be asked of the witnesses. Generally, the senator has seen neither the statement nor the questions in advance.

One aide to a young senator was confounded when her boss unexpectedly turned up at a hearing where then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was testifying on a resolution to create a Select Committee on Intelligence. Since the senator had said the night

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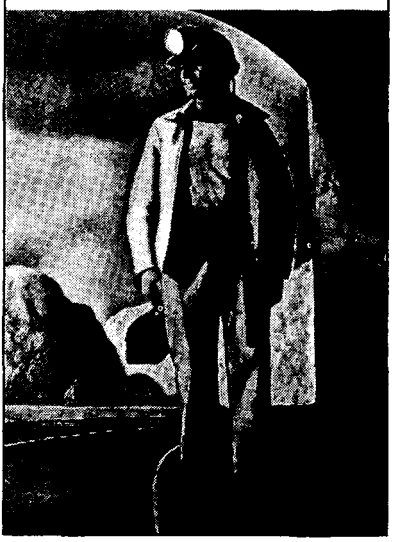

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before that he could not attend the hearing, she was as unprepared as he. "Quick," he whispered, "give me some questions." The aide, whose last contact with foreign affairs had been a course on Indian and Pakistani politics during her senior year in college, suddenly found herself scribbling questions for the Secretary of State. "I shook," she said later. "I didn't even know what I was writing. All I could imagine was this loud outburst of laughter as the senator asked some dumb question that I had written." Two minutes later the senator was asking her questions. Coming from the senator, the questions sounded more authoritative, and no one laughed.

More senators try to attend committee meetings where legislation is being acted on, but even here they are often at a loss as to what is going on. One aide recalled an incident involving her boss, James Sasser, then the newly elected senator from Tennessee. The Governmental Affairs Committee was marking up the bill to create the Department of Energy, and the Subcommittee on Civil Service and General Services, which Sasser chaired, had prepared a minor amendment. The amendment was of little importance to the Department of Energy, but it was enormously important to the General Services Administration, over which Sasser's subcommittee held jurisdiction. Somewhere along the way language had slipped into the bill that would have allowed the Department of Energy to construct office buildings. This power had previously resided exclusively with the GSA and the people there were determined to keep it that way.

The amendment was drafted and Sasser thoroughly briefed on its content. The session was called to order, and Senator Abraham Ribicoff, the committee chairman, began skimming through the lengthy bill. Page after page was called out, and if no amendments were brought up, the page was approved by unanimous consent. The subcommittee amendment belonged on page 64. Ribicoff turned to page 64, read the page number and after a brief pause said, "Approved." The aide was stunned. Then she noticed Sasser was looking at her in horrified bewilderment. Suddenly she found herself on her feet, saying, "Mr. Chairman, we have an amendment." Ribicoff and Senator Charles Percy, the ranking minority member, were gentle with Sasser in his inexperience. They permitted the amendment to be introduced. But halfway through Sasser's explanation of the amendment, he paused and rapidly rifled through the papers in front of him. Somehow he had lost a page of his statement. He turned to the aide and said in a horrified whisper that carried throughout the room, "What comes next?" As the committee waited and a packed committee room watched, the aide told Sasser what he was supposed to say and he repeated her words.

Sasser was really no less prepared than most of his colleagues usually are. His lack of familiarity with what was supposed to be his amendment was simply more obvious because of his inexperience. Unlike other senators he had not yet learned to absorb a staff briefing in minutes in order to fake preparedness, or to cope humourously in its absence.

At the end of 1977 the Senate Judiciary Committee was in the midst of another of its interminable sessions on legislation that would revamp the 200-year-old criminal code. The complex bill ran 360 pages. Senator Joseph Biden, then approaching the end of his first term in the Senate, had an amendment that, unlike Sasser's amendment to the Department of Energy bill, would affect the policy that was ultimately embodied in the reform. The discussion that day, in the words of a *Washington Post* reporter who covered the incident, centered on "the most awesome power the law can give one man over another—the license of a judge to take life, deprive liberty and confiscate material wealth." In this instance it had to do with time off for good behavior. Or so Biden thought.

"In other words, for every day of good behavior in prison—excuse me, I am being corrected here," Biden said,

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as members of his staff thrust a copy of his own amendment at him.

Then, seemingly confused and stumbling somewhat over his words, Biden attempted to digest and explain what his staff had prepared. Finally he startled his colleagues and the audience with a frank admission.

"Obviously," he said, "I don't know what the hell I'm talking about. I thought I had a two-for-one provision there. The staff, in its wisdom, rewrote it, so I guess I did not want that after all."

Life On The Floor

Senators are normally conspicuous by their absence on the floor. The sessions are so scantily attended that authors of the literature prepared by the Senate and given free to all tourists who happen to wander through their senator's office feel compelled to explain that if a constituent did not see his senator on the floor, it was undoubtedly because he was occupied with important business elsewhere. Staff, however, constantly monitor the floor for the senators. When the Senate is in session and a moderately important bill is on the floor, staff members are everywhere. A special gallery is set aside for staff so aides of senators who are not on the committee that reported the bill and are not sponsoring amendments can watch the proceedings. On the floor beside the one or two senators who are present to offer amendments sit one or more staff members juggling file folders and lengthy briefing books, handing their senators the appropriate fact sheet to support the amendment. The floor managers of the bill also have their aides present, who with a casual nod often determine which amendments are accepted and which must go to a vote.

In the back of the chamber on long, sagging leather couches sit the committee staff who have carefully shepherded the bill through committee and who have obtained unanimous consent from the Senate to be present throughout the debate. The Majority and Minority Leaders, who stand in the front of the chamber, have their own staffs nearby to keep them apprised of the significance of each amendment. In the senators' lobby adjacent to the floor, several other senators huddle with aides. In the public reception room to the right of the Senate chamber more aides lounge—aides who have not gotten or not sought the special passes that will admit them on the floor for five minutes and are waiting to buttonhole senators as they emerge. The atmosphere is somnolent.

All of this starts to change when a roll call vote is announced. Senators begin to filter in as the roll is read, but most wait until the six bells buzz through the Senate offices, signaling that five minutes remain before a recorded vote. Those six buzzers bring senators and staff running. The subway that runs between the Russell and Dirksen Office Buildings is now held for senators. Tourists back against the wall as senators rush into the special "Senators Only" elevators that whiz them to the second floor of the Capitol to disgorge them only a few feet from the door to the chamber. Aides run down from the staff gallery to the public reception room and try to flag down the senators while employees who guard the doors to the chamber try to keep them back and out of the way. Aides jockey for position around the small anteroom off the floor to call their offices. The arriving senators who have been summoned from other business have not the slightest inkling about the amendment on which they are called to vote unless it is that rare amendment that has been announced and scheduled in advance. As they arrive, they beckon their aides from the reception room or scan the chamber for their staff members, who are usually bobbing up and down so they can be spotted easily. When an aide finally catches up with his senator, he is apt to whisper hurriedly something like "This is a motion by Helms to table the Kennedy amendment to require mandatory energy-conservation standards." If the senator is a member of

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the committee that reported the bill, he might add, "The committee is against" —or "for"—"the motion." Whether his senator is on the committee or not, he will say, "You want to vote no"—or "yes." The senator casts his vote, except in rare instances, in accordance with his aide's advice.

But staff aides not only influence how a senator votes, they have also probably had a hand in writing the bill being voted on. Before legislation is ever introduced, aides outline the policy alternatives, and as an aide pointed out, the staff tends to "frame the options, and if you frame the options, you can often frame the outcome." The staff puts inchoate ideas into legislative language and drafts the introductory statement that accompanies a bill, detailing the purpose and need for the legislation. Once a bill is referred to a committee, the committee staffs take over. The committee staffs organize all hearings on legislation, select the witnesses, and then write the questions to be asked of them. Drafts of committee bills are written at staff meetings where aides work out the language that will be ratified or amended in the committee markups. When a bill is reported out, the staff writes the report that is filed along with it. The reports are the major source of information for other senators and more importantly their staffs. They become the basis for interpretation of legislative intent by courts and administrative agencies.

The Specialists

Aides who specialize tend to survive year after year. They provide an institutional memory, a repository of facts and experience as well as a network of personal contacts. Long-term staff members have a decided advantage over their bosses, who simply lack the expertise and knowledge to challenge their recommendations.

One of the best examples was Laurence Woodworth, who at the time of his death in 1977 was assistant secretary of the Treasury for tax policy and President Carter's top adviser on tax matters. Before that, he had spent 32 years on the staff of the Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation. During his last 14 years he served as staff director. Woodworth understood the intricacies of the tax code as well as anyone in the country and better than most. As the staff director of the little known committee that drafts all tax legislation for both houses, he was responsible for all the revisions of the Internal Revenue Code for over a decade. During the 94th Congress, when the House Ways and Means Committee was grappling with energy tax legislation under a new chairman, Woodworth guided the committee day after day. The committee's bewilderment was such that an oil lobbyist remarked during the extended markup sessions, "I'm moving to a safe country. Like Libya." It was Woodworth who time and again brought the committee back from the fringes of total disarray. The new chairman, Rep. Al Ullman of Washington, found himself turning to Woodworth repeatedly. "Restate it again very simply," Ullman said one day. "I'm totally confused here. Will you please clarify it?" Moreover, Woodworth was on occasion the only one who could explain to reporters covering the sessions what the committees had done. At the time of Woodworth's death, Ullman said, "In his quiet way he was as much an influence in shaping tax policy in this country as any committee chairman or Treasury secretary or president in recent memory."

Another such aide was Harley Dirks, for 12 years the staff director of the Appropriations subcommittee that controls the budget of the Departments of Labor and Health, Education and Welfare. Dirks and his boss, Warren Magnuson, the chairman of the subcommittee, were a good example, to a greater degree even than Woodworth and the chairmen of the tax-writing committees, of the way that the power of aides and that of their senators are interdependent. Everyone in Washington—lobbyists, bureau-

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crats, and Hill people—knew that the man to see on anything that had to do with labor, health, education, or welfare appropriations was Harley Dirks. The officials who ran the programs sought his help in restoring funds that had been cut by the Office of Management and Budget. Dozens of lobbyists who work for the poor, the sick, and the elderly curried his favor. Hill aides and members who wanted money for a pet project found their way to his crowded office on the first floor of the Dirksen Office Building. So many programs and so much money are involved that no senator, and certainly not one like Magnuson, who is also chairman of a major committee, could possibly hope to master the entire budget on his own. The chairman of a subcommittee like that would inevitably rely on the staff, but Magnuson's dependence on Dirks grew over the years until it was difficult to tell where one ended and the other began.

Dirks and Magnuson first met in 1964 when Dirks was running the Lyndon Johnson presidential campaign in Washington state. Magnuson was impressed by Dirks, who was then a farmer, banker, and owner of shoe, clothing, and liquor stores in tiny Othello, Washington. Magnuson asked if he would be interested in helping to shape up his Washington office. Dirks was. He first came for only three months, which soon stretched into five months and then into years.

The two got along well, and Dirks worked hard. Most mornings he was up at 5 a.m., studying reports and briefing materials stuffed into the two or three battered briefcases he lugged home every night. He never got home early, and after dinner there were papers and memos to read out of the same briefcases that opened again early in the morning in the recreation room of his home in the suburbs. Dirks did what Magnuson was unable to do. He mastered the programs. He fed Magnuson good advice. And through Dirks' help Magnuson was able to stay on top of his subcommittee's work and by doing so to increase his power in the Senate.

The responsibility of the subcommittee grew as Johnson's "Great Society" added ever more programs to HEW. As the budget increased throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, Magnuson came to depend on Dirks even more. Before long, Dirks' recommendations to cut or not to cut a program, to add or not to add funds, to reinstate or not to reinstate money were accepted more often than not. And as his recommendations tended to be accepted, Dirks' power grew. People around town learned that Dirks was a heavyweight. If Magnuson couldn't be reached, perhaps Dirks could be. Eventually, Dirks' phone rang first.

Self-aggrandizement is an occupational disease among staff on Capitol Hill, as common as the flu in winter. There are few foreign affairs advisers to senators, for instance, who do not in their heart of hearts believe that they are as important as the Secretary of State. Officially, they will always disclaim their importance, but their unguarded statements often reveal more than they intended. So it was with Dirks. Once in a conversation with a reporter about staff power he said, "A lot of staff guys kid themselves about how much power they have. I've got a lot of guys who know who Harley Dirks is but if Magnuson dropped dead tomorrow, there'd be a lot fewer of them." Dirks was right. Ultimately, an aide's power stops where the desk of the man who employs him begins. It is a political cliche that Washington is a harsh town, and there are thousands of aides who never understand why their telephone stops ringing the morning after a congressional or presidential election. After a while, aides forget that their power is derivative. Earlier in the conversation, Dirks unwittingly revealed more about the way he actually viewed himself. Talking about the demands of his job on his family, he said, "It was difficult when (the children) were small but they've survived 12 years of their father *being in the Senate.*" ■

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Who's Who in the Carter Administration

Alonzo McDonald, Hamilton Jordan's new deputy, is a former chief executive of McKinsey and Co., a leading management consulting firm. One thing he didn't leave behind when he joined the government was a penchant for using the kind of sentences management consultants like to throw around in conversations to one another. Here's a sample from one recent interview he gave: "There's a hope that some of the cross-roughing will be done earlier... that decisions will be broadly based... that we can increase inputs," and "We need a process of involvement, an exchange of information, a synthesization.... We've got to look at how problems interlink, the monitoring and the execution."... The retirement of **Jack McDermott** as associate director of the FBI was the final step in the de-Hooverization of the agency. Since William Webster became director, every top FBI official who had been closely associated with the late J. Edgar Hoover has departed. McDermott was the last to go. Webster has named three new top deputies, none of whom were ever closely identified with Hoover during their FBI careers.... **Ruth Harkin**, the new deputy general counsel of the Agriculture Department, is married to Rep. Thomas Harkin of Iowa. Harkin is on the House Agriculture Committee....

In

WHITE HOUSE

Counsel to the President—**Lloyd Cutler**, a partner in the Washington law firm of Wilmer, Cutler and Pickering, replaces Robert J. Lipshutz.

Special Representative for Trade Negotiations—**Reuben Askew,** the former governor of Florida, replaces Robert S. Strauss.

Staff Director—**Alonzo McDonald** was Deputy Special Trade Representative. In this newly-created position, he will be Hamilton Jordan's chief deputy.

Presidential Assistant for Public Affairs and Personnel—**Sarah Weddington** replaces Tim Kraft. She will continue to be the President's Special Adviser on Women's Issues.

Special Assistant to the President—**Esteban F. Torres,** who had been Ambassador to UNESCO, will handle White House liaison with the Hispanic community.

Assistant Director of Public Affairs, Office of Management and Budget—**Rush Loving, Jr.**, has been an associate editor of *Fortune* magazine.

Associate Director for Economics and Government, OMB—**Rodger O. Schlickeisen** has been a staff director with the Senate Budget Committee since 1974.

Director, First Lady's staff—**Kit Dobelle** had been the chief of protocol at the State Department.

Deputy to the Special Ambassador to the Middle East—**James F. Leonard,** who had been a deputy U.S. Representative to the U.N., will assist Robert Strauss.

Chairman, Council of Environmental Quality—**Gus Speth** has been acting chairman since last June, and a member of the council since 1977. He was previously on the staff of the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental lobby.

AGRICULTURE

Deputy Undersecretary for International Affairs—**James Starkey** worked in the foreign agriculture section of the Office of the Special Representative for Trade Negotiations.

Assistant Secretary, Natural Resources and Environment—**M. Rupert Cutler** was Assistant Secretary for Conservation, Research and Education.

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COMMERCE

Director, Office of State and Local Governmental Assistance—**Robert Roper** was Special Assistant for Intergovernmental Relations.

ENERGY

Deputy Secretary—**John C. Sawhill** has been president of New York University since 1975. During the Nixon and Ford administrations, he was the government's top energy official.

Transition Team Coordinator—**Deanne C. Siemer** was general counsel for the Defense Department. She will become an assistant to the Secretary of Energy once her transition team duties are completed.

DEFENSE

Undersecretary for Policy—**Robert Komer,** former head of pacification in Vietnam under Johnson, was Defense Secretary Harold Brown's adviser on NATO affairs.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Logistics and Financial Management—**Roy Werner** had been chief counsel for the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

Director, Selective Service System—**Bernard D. Rostker** was Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

Answers to last month's puzzle:

HEW

Special Assistants to the Secretary—**David Calkins,** who was a White House Fellow on the Domestic Policy Staff, will handle health issues. **Helen Kanovsky,** a special assistant to Secretary Particia Harris at HUD, will handle education and welfare issues. Two other Harris special assistants, **Victor Villaplana** and **James M. Crawford,** will follow her from HUD to HEW.

Assistant Secretary for Legislation—**William Welch** held the same position at HUD.

JUSTICE

Associate Attorney General—**John H. Shenefield** was head of Justice's Antitrust division.

Assistant Attorney General, Civil Division—**Alice Daniels** was general counsel of the Legal Service Corp.

Executive Assistant for Law Enforcement Services, FBI—**Donald W. Moore, Jr.,** was Assistant Director of the bureau's criminal investigations division.

Executive Director for Investigations, FBI—**Lee Colwell** was director for the planning and inspection division.

Executive Director for Administration, FBI—**Homer Boynton** was director of public affairs. Boynton, Moore and Colwell were all promoted as part of a reorganization by FBI Director William Webster. Webster has eliminated the job of "associate director," formerly the number two position at the FBI, and divided its responsibilities among the three men.

STATE

Ambassador to the United Nations—**Donald McHenry** has been named to replace Andrew Young. He had been Young's chief deputy, and led the negotiations to permit American officials to interview Bolshoi ballet dancer Ludmila Vlasova before her return to the Soviet Union.

Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates—**William D. Wolle** was ambassador to Oman from 1974 to 1978.

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AGENCIES AND COMMISSIONS

Central Intelligence Agency
Deputy Director for National Intelligence—**Bruce Clarke, Jr.,** who has been in the CIA for 26 years, replaces Robert Bowie, who retired.

Civil Aeronautics Board
Member—**George A. Dally** has been deputy assistant secretary of State for Human Rights and Social Affairs since 1977.

Consumer Product Safety Commission
Commissioner—**Stuart Statler** was chief minority counsel for the Senate Governmental Affairs Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

Federal Reserve System
Manager for Domestic Operations—**Peter Sternlight** was deputy manager of the Federal Reserve Bank in New York.

Manager for Foreign Operations—**Scott Pardee** was also a deputy manager at the Federal Reserve Bank in New York.

Federal Trade Commission
Commissioner—**Pat Bailey** was executive legal assistant to the general counsel of the Merit Systems Protection Board.

National Commission on Air Quality
Member—**Leonard A. Schine,** a senior partner in a Westport, Conn., law firm, replaces Jay Hammond, the governor of Alaska, who resigned.

Out

White House
Counsel to the President—**Robert Lipshutz** will return to Georgia, where he will chair a commission to launch a Carter Presidential Library and serve as co-trustee for the Carter family trust fund.

Presidential Assistant for Public Affairs and Personnel—**Tim Kraft** has been named manager of the Carter-Mondale Presidential Committee.

Personnel Consultant—**Daniel W. Horgan** resigned after only four days on the job after being linked to a fee-splitting scandal while he was Deputy Commissioner of New Jersey's Community Affairs Department. Horgan denied any wrongdoing, but his boss, personnel director Arnie Miller said "it [was] difficult for him to do the work we hired him to do until he can clarify the allegations."

Commerce
Legislative Adviser to the Secretary—**Robert Weinberger** has resigned to run for Congress.

Defense
General Counsel for the Army—**Jill Wine Volner** will return to private practice.

Energy
Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental and Institutional Relations—**Philip S. Hughes** has resigned.

Interior
Deputy Undersecretary—**Barbara Heller** has resigned, citing personal reasons.

Justice
Special Assistant to the Attorney General—**Terrence Adamson,** who was Griffin Bell's special assistant in charge of public information, will become a fellow at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. **J. Philip Jordan** will join the Washington law firm of Leva, Hawes, Shimington, Martin and Oppenheimer. **Frederick Barton** will work for the U.S. Attorney's office in Washington.

Associate Director, FBI—**Jack McDermott** has resigned.

State
Ambassador to the United Nations—**Andrew Young** has resigned.

Agencies and Commissions

Central Intelligence Agency
National Intelligence Tasking Office—**Lt. Gen. Frank A. Camm** is leaving to take another, unspecified position outside the government.

Immigration and Naturalization
Commissioner—**Leonel J. Castillo** has resigned. He plans to return to Houston to run either for mayor or city council.

Securities and Exchange Commission
General Counsel—**Fred Townsend** has left the SEC to join Public Citizen, a Ralph Nader organization.

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Mail Fraud on Capitol Hill

by Mark Feldstein

Quick—who's Milton R. Young? If you don't know the answer you're not alone. Yet Milton R. Young is a member of the United States Senate, a Republican from the state of North Dakota. He has, in fact, been a senator longer than any other Republican alive. He was first elected back in 1945, and every six years since then his constituents have given him a pat on the back and returned him to Washington. But because of his low visibility (to put it mildly) the secret of his success has always been just that—a secret. Young certainly hasn't made it through the prominence of his legislative achievements. He doesn't pander to the press. Nor is he any great shakes as an orator. So how has he lasted so long?

Recently, we stumbled upon the answer. Milton Young's greatness has nothing to do with anything as mundane as legislation or speechmaking. His genius lies in one of those arcane talents that count for so much on Capitol Hill. Writing letters. When it comes to answering his mail, Milton R. Young is practically in a class by himself.

At first glance, that may not sound like much. Handling "legislative correspondence," as they call it on Capitol Hill, seems like a mechanical process. Thanks to the congressional frank, thousands of letters pour out of Washington each day. Stock replies are stored in up-to-date computers, stamped out onto paper by expensive word processors, signed by robo machines. But looks can be deceiving—and they are in this case. While mail has always enjoyed a special status in politics (see sidebar), in recent years responding to constituents has assumed an even greater role in the

Mark Feldstein is a reporter with KAET-TV, Phoenix, Arizona.

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political lives of legislators. It takes talent, creativity, and hard work to do it right.

These days, the successful politician does not see a letter from his home district as a burden, taking up valuable staff time and energy. He eagerly pounces on it as an opportunity to win another vote, to convince his constituents that, even if the government doesn't work, their representative is all right. This positive attitude toward the mail has become even more important since the well-known rise of the "single-issue" lobbies. These groups, in general, can make the life of any congressman miserable. He may be doing his best to serve his district, trying hard not to annoy anybody, but these lobbies want to *pin him down* on a solitary issue—and what's worse, they threaten to vote against him if he doesn't agree with them 100 per cent. It's enough to give a man an ulcer, knowing that unless he toes the line a sizeable organization of political activists will be trying to bounce him out of office.

There is, however, a silver lining even in this cloud. The very weakness of the single-issue groups is that they write letters like crazy, asking their representative or senator for his position on the their particular cause celebre. And a congressman does not have to be a handwriting expert to tell where the average letter-writer on gun control or ERA is coming from. That is where the naive single-issue fanatic gives his congressman a crucial advantage: the congressman knows his constituents' views *before* he must respond. It is an angle a skilled incumbent will play for all it is worth, because it represents his last, best hope of defusing the anger of the single-issue voter. The ideal—and only a talented few ever approach this—is to use the mail to keep *everybody* happy, on both sides of an issue, however clear-cut, however volatile. It's not easy. It requires a sophisticated understanding of phrasing and nuance, an unusual capacity for confusing an issue, and the moral strength to duck it entirely when necessary. But the rewards are great—because if you answer your mail skillfully, there is a good chance that, like Milton Young, you will be rewarded by your constituents with a long, comfortable stay on Capitol Hill.

Meeting The Challenge

In order to find out how the U.S. Senate was responding to this challenge, we conducted a little experiment. We took the most explosive, emotional issue we could possibly find, one in which there is virtually no room for compromise, one that would epitomize the take-no-prisoners atmosphere of single-issue politics, and we sent letters, pro and con, to each member of the Senate. The issue we chose was, of course, abortion. In one letter we claimed we attended Harvard, were registered to vote in the senator's home state, and wanted to know whether he agreed with our pro-abortion position. "In my opinion, women should have the right to decide for themselves whether to have an abortion, without government interference. I believe that this is a basic moral right that should extend to rich and poor women alike," our letter said.

Then, in the other letter, we claimed we were attending Arizona State University and took the equal but opposite stand. "I firmly oppose abortion in any manner," the letter said. "I believe that life begins at conception, and that any attempt to abort that life can only be considered a form of murder." In each letter we asked the senator, point blank, to tell us what his position was.

These letters, it turns out, were an ideal way to separate the pros from the flat-footed amateurs and single-termers. It's not easy to keep both sides of the abortion issue happy. On less challenging topics, many politicians might be able to fall back on a few simple, time-honored tricks, like lying. You can't do that with abortion; it's too damn visible.

Ignorant of the rich possibilities that exist this side of perjury, the non-professional might be tempted to

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simply state his position in a bold, no-nonsense fashion, hoping the voter will be impressed with his honesty even while disagreeing with him. If he was in favor of abortion, the senator might consider answering his anti-abortion mail like this:

Dear (name of anti-abortion writer):

Thank you for your comments, but frankly, it's nuts like you who make my job difficult. Although you may not like it, you should know that I support public funding of all abortions and will fight to the death any constitutional amendment banning them. In addition, I view abortion as a valuable part of family planning, and say, without shame, that both my wife and two daughters have been able to avoid unwanted pregnancies thanks to the wise and courageous Supreme Court decision of 1973.

Best wishes,
(senator's name here)

But, as our responses showed, the pros realize that there's not much percentage in this approach, even in the post-Watergate Age of Candor. A letter like that is a wasted opportunity to win over the correspondent as a friend and potential supporter, to find and exploit those areas of political agreement—however tiny they may be—that will let a senator continue to enjoy the life of an important politician. All a letter like that does is put him a step closer to the unemployment line.

And that's a step Milton Young would never take. Young doesn't indulge in any delusions about the political value of candor. His approach shows considerably more savvy. Nevertheless, it is as breathtaking in its simplicity as it is bold in its conception: when Milton Young gets an abortion letter, from whatever its source, he merely agrees wholeheartedly with his correspondent. "I appreciated hearing from you and learning of your opposition to abortion," he replied to our anti-abortion inquiry. "I thought you would be pleased to know that I have strongly supported the position you take. I have been a co-sponsor of a resolution in the Senate proposing a Human Life Amendment since the Supreme Court issued its decision liberalizing abortion almost six years ago." And he does not let this seemingly uncompromising language fluster him when he receives a pro-abortion query. "I appreciated hearing from you and receiving your views on this matter," he writes. "I agree with you that a woman should have a right to decide whether or not she wants an abortion. . . ."

Clever, no? By agreeing with both sides, Young has managed to keep everyone content. If his correspondents ever compared notes, of course, they might be confused as to Young's stand. But this, as Young knows, is not a likely possibility. It is far more probable that both single-issue fanatics will be among the majority that returns Young to the Senate in the next election. No wonder he has managed to stay around all these years.

But Young, we discovered in our experiment, has by no means cornered the market on constituent letter techniques—though he has refined the

Analyzing Presidents:

From Passive-Positive Taft to Active-Positive Carter

by
JAMES DAVID BARBER

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underlying principle down to its purest essentials. Senator Claiborne Pell, for example, offered a nice variation on the basic Young strategy in his letter to our anti-abortion correspondent. "I personally do not like the idea of abortion," Pell wrote. "In past debates on the Hyde amendment, I voted to severely restrict the number of Medicaid-funded abortions because I do not think that abortions should be used as a form of birth control. I intend to again vote to severely restrict abortions under Medicaid." To the right-to-lifer, this looks pretty good. After all, the Hyde amendment is the toughest anti-abortion proposal around, permitting federally funded abortions only when the life of the mother is endangered, with no ifs, ands, or buts. If Pell voted for that, it's a pretty sure thing he deserves your single-issue vote next time around. But, of course, while the letter makes it look like Pell voted for the Hyde amendment, *nowhere does it actually say it.* In fact, Pell has consistently voted *against* the Hyde amendment and in favor of a more liberal compromise that still "severely restricts abortion." But again, that is the sort of quibbling detail that would probably bore a constituent, and might spoil the friendly tone of Pell's letter.

Tricks of the Trade

Not all senators can rise to the level of a Milton Young or a Claiborne Pell. Maybe it was just a temporary attack of conscience, but many senators, in their letters, couldn't quite bring themselves to go as far as these men did. In fact, about a third of the Senate sent replies that fairly accurately conveyed their positions on the issue. The rest aren't amateurs, though—not by a long shot. They have simply discovered that there is more than one way to tip-toe around a hot issue. In fact, there are a number of promising strategies. Here are some of the most popular:

The Half Duck Step. A widely-imitated, though admittedly unsophisticated technique, used mostly by Senate liberals. Here's how it works:

Say you're Birch Bayh. You're up for election next year, and you could be in trouble. The anti-abortion lobby has been spreading malicious rumors about your voting record for years. Are you going to give them more ammunition when you answer their letters? Of course not. A quick sidestep of the issue will suffice quite nicely. Here is the key paragraph in Birch Bayh's letter to people who oppose abortion: "As you may know, the House of Representatives voted to bar the use of federal funds for abortion purposes unless the life of the mother is at stake. The Senate Appropriations Committee recently approved language prohibiting the use of funds for abortion except to save the life of the mother, where medically necessary or in cases of rape or incest. You can be sure that I will keep your strong views on this important issue in mind in the days ahead." You noticed, of course, that despite all those words, Bayh has answered the letter without ever revealing his position.

Bayh is not the only one who favors this method. His liberal colleague, John Culver, is also up for reelection next year. You remember Culver, don't you? He is the man immortalized in *The New Yorker* last year by correspondent Elizabeth Drew. One of the things Drew liked best about Culver was the way he railed against the special interests and the single-issue groups. Oh, was he fierce. But when it comes to answering his mail, Culver knows when to bury the hatchet. He too avoids all mention of his position to his anti-abortion correspondent. "As is my usual practice," he writes at the end of a letter that has done nothing more than sum up the status of current legislation, "I shall look closely and conscientiously into the merits of both sides of this argument before arriving at my own final determination. I. . . shall certainly keep your comments in mind when the full Senate votes on this matter."

What a fair and sensitive man, you might think after reading this letter. And what a relief that he hasn't yet

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made up his mind. Meanwhile, however, both Bayh and Culver are smart enough to tell a pretty different story to their pro-abortion writers. This time they don't duck the issue at all—but come out four-square in opposition to the Hyde amendment and in favor of less restrictive language. "I supported this language and voted against attempts to further restrict federal fund usage," Culver proclaims proudly.

The Full Duck Step. If the half duck step avoids the issue in one of the letters, the full duck avoids it in *both.* That's how Russell Long handled his letters. Does Long, a busy and powerful man, really have time to think about things like abortion? Perhaps not. Still, the insights he has on the issue, even without taking a stand, are quite impressive. "It has been apparent to me for some time," he writes, "that a number of religious, ethical, and constitutional considerations of this question makes it extremely difficult to achieve a solution satisfactory to all."

A variation on the full duck step is the Stennis Method, named for its leading Senate practitioner, John Stennis of Mississippi. The technique is simplicity itself—all your staff need do is ignore the specific questions asked in any letter and inundate the writer with material—preferably faded, small-print xeroxes from the *Congressional Record.* This forces the reader to wade through pages of overblown oratory in order to figure out your elusive position.

The Buckpasser's Choice. This technique reflects the widespread belief among senators that truly controversial issues are best resolved someplace other than the Senate. In the case of abortion, for example, everything was just dandy before 1973, when the practice was regulated by various state laws. The Supreme Court's decision in that year threw the ball into the lap of Congress for the first time. So today there are a lot of senators who have no apparent views on whether abortion is murder or a fundamental exercise of personal freedom—but who do feel quite strongly that, murder or not, the states were doing a pretty good job before and should do so again.

Herman Talmadge: "In my judgment, this is an area of such great sensitivity the federal government should not be involved in it one way or the other."

William Roth: "As you are aware, this is an extremely emotional issue which has been heatedly debated by Congress. Because of the nature of the issue, I feel the abortion issue should be resolved on the state, not federal level."

For others, though—like Senator Don Riegle—abortion is too profound a question for either federal politicians or state ones. Better leave it to the judges. The vision Riegle conjures up is traumatic indeed: "A Congress that might vote to prohibit abortion now, in ten years could be a Congress that could turn and use the same power to *require* abortion—to pass a law actually limiting family size. With such powers, Congress could also pass anti-life euthanasia legislation. I don't want to see this happen," wrote Riegle, and who wouldn't agree with him? What to do? Well, the way Riegle sees it, the only solution is to give the whole thing back to the courts. "In our government of divided power, it is much wiser to let this question be resolved within our judicial system where finally the nine members of the Supreme Court—who serve with lifetime appointments outside the pressures of political life—can struggle with the conflicting views and scientific and medical evidence in reaching a sensible and balanced judgment."

The Search for Consensus. A difficult exercise that should be tried only by true experts. With this strategy, the senator attempts to write a letter that actually takes a position, but a position that will gain the respect, if not the wholehearted support, of the contending factions. On abortion, the most promising straw to grasp is the possibility of a new birth control technique or government program that will eliminate the whole messy moral dilemma once and for all. One who took this route was former Senator Thomas McIntyre. After struggling

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"The Mark Twain Method"

Not everyone is as good at writing constituent responses as the people we've described in the accompanying article. Consider the experience of Mark Twain, who, during a two-month stint as personal secretary to Senator William M. Stewart of Nevada, proved to be utterly incapable of writing the kind of letter that ensures the reelection of his boss. In a story called "My Late Senatorial Secretaryship," Twain parodies the meeting in which the Senator confronts Twain about the quality of the letters he has been writing to the Senator's constituents:

"But that my political murder might be made sure," sputters the Senator, "some evil instinct prompted me to hand you this memorial from the grave company of elders composing the Board of Aldermen of the city of San Francisco, to try your hand upon—a memorial praying that the city's right to the water-lots upon the city front might be established by law of Congress. I told you this was a dangerous matter to move in. I told you to write a non-committal letter to the Aldermen—an ambiguous letter—a letter that should avoid, as far as possible, all real consideration and discussion of the water-lot question. If there is any feeling left in you—any shame—surely this letter you wrote, in obedience to that order, ought to evoke it, when its words fall upon your ears." Then Twain's boss reads the letter aloud:

"The Hon. Board of Aldermen, etc.

"GENTLEMEN: George Washington, the revered Father of his Country is dead. His long and brilliant career is closed, alas! forever. He was greatly respected in this section of the country, and his untimely decease cast a gloom over the whole community. He died on the 14th day of December, 1799. He passed peacefully away from the scene of his honors and his great achievements, the most lamented hero and the best beloved that ever earth hath yielded unto Death. At such a time as this, *you* speak of water-lots!—what a lot was his!

"What is fame! Fame is an accident. Sir Isaac Newton discovered an apple falling to the ground—a trivial discovery, truly, and one which a million men had made before him—but his parents were influential and so they tortured that small circumstance into something wonderful, and, lo! the simple world took up the shout and, in almost the twinkling of an eye, that man was famous. Treasure these thoughts.

"Poesy, sweet poesy, who shall estimate what the world owes to thee!

"Mary had a little lamb,
its fleece was white as snow—
And everywhere that Mary went,
the lamb was sure to go.

"Jack and Gill went up the hill
To draw a pail of water.
Jack fell down and broke his crown,
And Gill came tumbling after.

"For simplicity, elegance of diction, and freedom from immoral tendencies, I regard those two poems in the light of gems. They are suited to all grades of intelligence, to every sphere of life—to the field, to the nursery, to the guild. Especially should no Board of Aldermen be without them.

"Venerable fossils! write again. Nothing improves one so much as friendly correspondence. Write again—and if there is anything in this memorial of yours that refers to anything in particular, do not be backward about explaining it. We shall always be happy to hear you chirp.

"Very Truly, etc.
"MARK TWAIN,
For James W.N**, U.S. Senator."

"That is an atrocious, a ruinous epistle! Distraction!" fumes the Senator. "Well, sir," replies Twain, "I am really sorry if there is anything wrong about it—but—it appears to me to dodge the water lot question."

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with the opposing moral absolutes for a few paragraphs, McIntyre writes, "As long as we persist in debating the abortion issue in the narrow terms of whether it should be eliminated or reduced by legislation or by constitutional amendment, we will remain at bitter odds." McIntyre's solution? "Far better," he writes, "that we should join hands and broaden the field of endeavor, turning our mutual effort to means we can all live with. I am encouraged, for example, by the promise of new natural methods of birth control that may well turn out to be more reliable than either the rhythm system or the temperature system."

The danger of the search for consensus is that, instead of appearing as the eloquent architect of reconciliation, a senator may seem more like a spineless waffler. The letter sent to our anti-abortion correspondent by then-Senator William Hathaway, for example, pointed out that he was in favor of Medicaid abortions, but added that he would gladly switch positions under the right circumstances. "I want you to know," Hathaway wrote, "that I would not necessarily be opposed to a constitutional amendment to modify the Court's holding. . . . But until a consensus can be reached on how to do this. . . I would continue to support Medicaid funding." This, frankly, was not one of the better responses to our letters, and helps explain, perhaps, why Hathaway has had to find a new line of work.

Benign Neglect: Sometimes the best answer is no answer. It can be done. By simply ignoring the letters of constituents who don't agree with his position, a senator avoids the tiresome chore of composing an evasive response, thus saving both time and the taxpayers' money. This cost-cutting method is preferred by Senators William Proxmire, John Danforth, and Edward Zorinsky. But they were courteous enough to answer those with whom they agreed, as would any concerned politician.

Ring Around the Issue. If, as a senator, you feel you must respond, you may decide you have no choice but to pull out all the stops and write a letter so confusing, so full of catchphrases and hemming and hawing that no one—including yourself—can figure out what you're talking about. It's a difficult job, not for beginners, but if you do it well enough, you can get away with writing the same letter to both constituents, and they may both end up thinking you are on their side. It was hard not to be impressed, for example, with the way Senator Joseph Biden handled the issue. "Philosophically, I disagree with that [Supreme Court] decision and would have preferred a more restrictive one," Biden says. "Nevertheless, I feel that the decision was consistent with the tenets of religious freedom and individual choice which underlie our democratic form of government. From this perspective I am not persuaded that such a highly personal issue lends itself to federal legislation or a constitutional amendment. Instead, we must emphasize individual responsibility for the precious gift of human life. By the same token, if this issue is so personal that the federal government does not prohibit it, that government also must not encourage it. That is why I have so consistently opposed the use of Medicaid funds to finance abortion."

Confused? You should be—that's the beauty of Biden's work. You can read those sentences again and again and you still won't have *the faintest idea what he means.* Smugly, Biden ends his letter by saying, "I think it is vital that we each know where the other stands."

When it comes to circling the issue, however, one senator stood apart from all the others. If Milton Young is the master of the art of agreement, this man's genius is obfuscation. He has taken most of the basic techniques described here and, as they say, put them all together, adding a few innovations of his own. The result is a dazzling array of fakes and maneuvers, a letter so confusing and convoluted that a lawyer would have a hard time unraveling it. We are speaking of Senator Harrison Williams of New Jersey.

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In his letter to his anti-abortion constituent, Williams begins by softening the blow. "I have always felt very strongly about the value, dignity and promise of human life, and this has been the underlying foundation of my work in the Congress to establish federal programs that provide new opportunities and new hopes for mentally and physically handicapped persons, victims of inherited diseases and children of poor and broken families. It has also prompted my work in education, health care, safe and healthy working conditions, just compensations and pension guarantees, alcoholism and other chemical addictions, the plight of aging Americans."

What does any of this have to do with abortion, you ask? *Nothing at all,* but how can anyone be against any of those things? Like any good senatorial correspondent, Williams knows the value of irrelevant issues. Also note the use of the key catch phrase "dignity... of human life." Incorporating that into the first paragraph gives the impression of support, even when support is not actually there. Give Williams points for a well-executed variation of the Pell maneuver.

Next, Williams heads into the murky world of consensus: "But I have been apprehensive about adopting any of the constitutional amendments that have been proposed to prohibit abortions. The nation is deeply divided on this question. Prominent lawyers and even leading theologians, have taken diametrically opposite positions... and on both sides, their followers number in the millions. Without a broad legal and theological consensus of support a constitutional amendment would be unenforceable."

Finally, Williams lets it all hang out with a triumphant duckstep: "Until a consensus develops on a legal approach to the issue, each of us must make up his or her own mind about the moral questions surrounding abortion, and our decision will depend heavily upon what regard we have for life in each of its developmental stages. I have found a growing respect for life and I sincerely hope that this encouraging trend continues and flourishes in the years ahead."

After reading Williams' letter, you know practically all there is to know about abortion, except for one small detail: Williams' stand on the issue you asked him about. Here is a man with a gift.

No Hope for Clark

Of course, mastering the techniques of mail-answering is not a guarantee of reelection. If a senator becomes publicly identified with a position, after all, even the best letters in the world won't protect him from a single-issue group bent on revenge.

Sifting through our stack of senators' responses, for example, we came across the two sent out by the former senator from Iowa, Dick Clark. It was kind of poignant, reading over Clark's desperate reply to the anti-abortionists. It had the ring of an old Bob Hope sketch in which the cowardly Hope tries to talk his attacker out of beating him up. The letter wanders back and forth, complimenting the reader, expressing understanding of his point of view ("personally, I oppose abortion"), fudging ("I think it is important to point out that restricting Medicaid funds... is not a solution to the difficult question of abortion"), and searching for consensus ("finding ways to prevent the dilemma in the first place"). Along the way, however, Clark reluctantly admits he doesn't favor cutting back Medicaid abortions.

Clark's letter was a good one. But ultimately, it wasn't good enough. At the same time, Clark succinctly told his pro-abortion writer that he voted against any restrictions on Medicaid funds for abortion. "I'm glad to know that we agree on this issue," he concluded. It was the sort of straight talk that endeared Clark to his supporters, and gave him a reputation of which he can be proud, wherever he is now. ■

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Tidbits and Outrages

Another Six for 'Savy'

The first Japanese-American ever elected to Congress from the continental United States was not invited to the White House state dinner for the Japanese prime minister. The reason: his name is Norman Mineta and the White House staff thought he was Italian.

'We Make It Simple' Dept.

The Department of Energy offers this helpful advice to those who want to comply with the government's building temperature rules:

- Alternatively, measurements of the actual room temperature and humidity levels may be made by the following means:
- For measuring dry-bulb temperatures:
  - —Reading a thermometer placed within two feet of the thermostat; or
  - —Averaging the thermometer readings taken two feet away from and at the center of each external wall in the center of the room; or
  - —Taking the temperature at the center of the room if there are no external walls.
- For measuring dew-point temperature:
  - —Using an instrument that indicates dew-point temperature; or
  - —Inference from the dry-bulb temperature and relative humidity.
- For measuring relative humidity:
  - —A humidity-indicating device (hygrometer); or
  - —Inference from the dew-point or from wet-bulb and dry-bulb temperature measurements (psychrometer).
- For measuring wet-bulb temperature:
  - —An instrument for measuring wet-bulb temperature (psychrometer); or
  - —Inference from the dew-point temperature or relative humidity.

Dew-point or wet-bulb temperatures and relative humidity may be measured within two feet of the humidity space-conditioning control device (humidistat), if located in the room, or in the same location used in measuring the dry-bulb temperature. To allow for HVAC system cycling, several temperature and humidity readings may be spaced to accommodate the time needed for compressors to go through their "on-off" cycles. Where an air-temperature control device controls the temperature in more than one room, the measurement(s) may be made in any one room controlled by that device.

The Meter Was Running

If you get into a taxicab with a Washington consultant, you can be sure he's not going to talk about anything except the weather and the Redskins. His industry is now faced with a congressional investigation because a couple of his colleagues talked about something else. Senator David Pryor explains: "A few weeks ago, I overheard an interesting discussion in a Washington cab I was sharing with two strangers. They were debating the amount they should charge a federal agency for their consulting services. Finally, deciding that they could get $25,000 as easily as $12,000, they set the fee at the higher rate."

Eggheads, Back to Your Rooms!

Have you seen *Harper's* new ad campaign: "Should you be punished for being born with a high IQ?" It begins, "History teaches us that the punishment for exceptional talent and intelligence is the indisputable fact of solitude."

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Memo of the Month

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JOHN M. MURPHY
17th District, New York

Chairman:
Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee

Chairman:
Ad Hoc Select Committee on Outer Continental Shelf

Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee

Dear Colleague:

The 157th Mobilization Designee Detachment, United States Army Reserve and I would like to take the opportunity of informing you that presently there are openings in this unit.

As a reservist, you are required to make 50 points a year in order to qualify for a good retirement year. Since you receive only 15 points per year for being a reservist, it is necessary for you to make up the remaining points by attending an annual training tour, completing correspondence courses or by attending reserve training meetings.

This is a "for points only" unit. This means you will receive no reserve pay but by joining the 157th MOB DES unit and attending meetings you may obtain the requisite 50 points needed for a good retirement year.

The unit meets on the Hill in the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, room 1334 Longworth House Office Building. The meetings are held at 6:30pm each Wednesday evening.

Special arrangements are now being made to accept reserve members of other Branches of Service for equivalent training points. If you belong to another Branch of Service, and wish to meet with us, please advise us as soon as possible so we can make the proper arrangements.

If you or members of your staff are currently members of a reserve unit, and interested in being attached to the 157th MOB DES unit or would like more information, please contact Jesse Brown at: 225-3371.

I am looking forward to having you join the 157th in the near future.

With kind regards, I remain

Sincerely,

John M. Murphy

JOHN M. MURPHY
Member of Congress

JMM:jb

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Power to the People: Making the Constitution Work Again

by Robert M. Kaus

Sometime in the next year the 34th state may call for a constitutional convention to balance the budget. It is a prospect that scares many of us—not so much the balanced budget as the idea of the convention itself, and the possibility that it could open up our founding document for a general revision. If the balanced budget drive fails, or even if it succeeds without producing "Con Con II," we will breathe a collective sigh of relief.

We shouldn't. We shouldn't because, to put it simply, we could use a constitutional convention. Our first constitution, and the government it created, aren't working anymore.

At a time when we desperately want our government to act—to meet the energy crisis, to slow inflation, to revitalize the economy—we find that it is paralyzed, unresponding. The two elected wings of the government, though nominally controlled by the same party, spend their efforts in combat with each other. Measures essential to the nation's interest are unable to pass through a legislature choked with the raw demands of locale and lobby. In the throes of a gas shortage, the president proposes a rationing plan; the Congress rejects one version, then amends another to death. It is a familiar pattern: when we demand a program of fair, general sacrifice, our constitutional machine seems programmed to produce only general selfishness.

All the while, a second government, one the Constitution did not create, continues to expand, out of control. This is the government of the agencies. When the president and Congress aren't attacking each other, they seek support by attacking this bureaucracy, seemingly oblivious to the question being begged. So congressmen seek votes by denouncing the regulatory agencies Congress created. The president, having failed to run Washington, runs against it. We are about to witness an extraordinary spectacle: both of the Constitution's democratically-chosen branches campaigning for reelection by opposing the government—neither,

Robert M. Kaus is an editor of The Washington Monthly.

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apparently, feeling that it might any longer justly be accused of *being* the government.

Something has gone very wrong since the Founding Fathers met in Philadelphia. Perhaps, in a decade or so, we will find that the whole mess has been straightened out—the bureaucracy brought under control, the government freed to act in the national interest—within the framework that was laid down in 1787. But don't count on it. Because the further we trace them, the more the roots of our dissatisfaction with government seem to end at the heart of the Constitution itself—in the inherent parochialism of Congress, the inability of the president to tame it, the built-in antagonism between both institutions. Instead of reforming this constitutional structure, we have tried to escape from it, by creating a new government in the agencies. In the process, we have lost the means of controlling the men and women who rule us—of making them *act*, and act swiftly, to solve our national problems. If we want to regain that ability, we have no choice but to make some fundamental changes in our political system. Not all of these changes require constitutional amendments. But many do. And, together, they represent such a radical departure from our current scheme that it is hard to believe they could be achieved and preserved by anything less than a full campaign for a constitutional overhaul. That is the irony of the balanced budget drive and the fears it raises. Because Con Con II might be the last chance we get to make the government work.

Built For Inaction

The truth is that our constitution was not designed to allow the government to act quickly on the wishes of the majority. It was designed to frustrate that action. The exaggerated power of "special interests," the debilitating stalemates between the president and Congress, are neither accidental nor necessary features of our politics. As any poli sci major knows, they were intentionally built into our system by men who believed in democracy but were terrified of majority tyranny. So the Federalists set up a legislature, made up of many single-member geographic districts, in order to give every interest and region its champion and prevent the easy coagulation of a majority. They divided the government against itself, into the three branches, the two houses of Congress, the national and local powers. The purpose of these features was, as Madison put it, to make sure any flame would be "unable to spread a general conflagration"—in other words, to protect minority interests by making concerted government action of any sort as difficult as was democratically possible.

The Founding Fathers did their job so well that when, in 1932, we needed a government that could avoid paralysis and take vigorous, sustained action, we abandoned the constitutional plan. In the crisis of the Depression, we wanted officials who could act firmly in the public interest—and we asked the fractious Congress to delegate its lawmaking authority to administrators who were beholden to no particular districts. We needed to overcome the built-in stalemates between the branches of government, so we created agencies, like the Securities and Exchange Commission and the National Labor Relations Board, that purposefully fused all three of the separated powers—executive, legislative and judicial—in a single body. To guide them, these agencies were given little except a few inspirational words of instruction from Congress. The NLRB was to ban "unfair labor practices"; the SEC to ban "manipulative or deceptive devices" where "necessary or appropriate in the public interest or for the protection of investors." But although the rules they turned out in pursuit of these platitudes would never be approved by Congress, those rules would have the force of laws. In the name of action, Congress gave away a substantial chunk of its power.

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But the need to act, to escape from the Constitution, was not the only motive behind the creation of the agencies. Mixed in, from the birth of the ICC in 1887 to the creation of the Consumer Product Safety Commission only seven years ago, was a desire to escape from politics itself—a powerful dose of the Progressive dogma that administration should be left to "independent" experts, protected from "partisan" pressures. So Congress, having given away its power to make binding rules, then insulated many of the rulemakers from the only other elected official in government who might have controlled them—the president.

This combination of New Deal activism and agency "independence" has proved a disaster. It was, in a constitutional sense, our original sin. Some of the agencies were in fact staffed with experts. Others weren't. But, freed from the need to please the "partisan" politicians, all these administrators were also freed from the need to please voters. Instead, they were left to satisfy other needs. If they were at the ICC or FCC, those needs were usually the interests of the industry they were supposed to regulate. If they saw business as an adversary—as with newer agencies like EPA and OSHA—they were able to pursue their single mission to the exclusion of all other goals. Regardless of ideology or purpose, they were independent enough to indulge in the natural bureaucratic imperatives of expansion and complication.

Their ability to act swiftly in pursuit of *any* goal was short-lived, however, because they soon fell under the sway of our least democratic branch, the courts. Lawyers instinctively distrusted the bureaucrats—and, indeed, they had a case once the agencies were removed from political control. But to them, the answer was a heavy application of the ritual balm of litigation. So they sued. Soon, agency proceedings began to look more and more like trials, with motions, objections and cross-examination, presided over by officials who looked suspiciously like judges. When these experts finally reached their conclusions, they were then subjected to further "review" by real judges. Even when the only issue was the proper way to list the ingredients of peanut butter, the courts began to pore over the "rulemaking record" to satisfy themselves that the agency had made no procedural missteps, had met its "burden of proof," "considered all the relevant factors," "responded to any especially significant comments." Finally, the courts would ask if, expertise notwithstanding, the agency had committed a "clear error of judgment" or an "abuse of discretion." If the judge disagreed with the agency—or, rather, if his "in-depth review" of the "record" revealed an "abuse of discretion"—it was time for another round.

In most of these proceedings, none of the participants, at any stage, had a compelling reason to act swiftly. The fixed salaries of judges offered no positive incentive for quick deliberation, while the lawyers' fees usually rose in direct proportion to the time they spent on arguments and briefs. Now that this system has been perfected, even a simple action, like setting safety standards for pickup trucks, takes at best a matter of years—while truly complex actions, like the labeling of peanut butter jars, can span decades.

As we created more and more agencies, both the courts and Congress became accustomed to this new role of judges as the roving supervisors of the bureaucracy. Congress—unwilling to take on the messy job itself—began to write even bigger parts for the judiciary into its regulatory scripts. And the judges, who had come to see themselves as the only officials able to bring the agencies to heel, gradually asserted control over even those rulemakers, at HEW or the Department of Interior, who were nominally not "independent," but under the control of the president.

The result of the whole process is that important political decisions—how to stop pollution, how to structure

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our basic industries, how to conserve energy—are increasingly left, first to the bureaucrats, and then to the arbitrary interplay of judges, interest groups and lawyers. These people have three things in common: they are not chosen by the people whose lives they affect; they have little incentive to act swiftly; and they are not the people whom the authors of the Constitution planned to have make important decisions for the nation.

In our attempt to escape from that constitution, we have come to a dead end. There is a way out. It is, first, to restore the effective control of the government to politicians who can be held accountable by the electorate; then, to protect their decisions from the judicial second-guessing that has crippled the regulatory process; and finally, to remove the obstacles to effective majority rule that the Federalists built into our government's plan, and that led us to abandon the Constitution in the first place.

Not Responsible

In a year we will troop to the polls to judge the performance of Jimmy Carter. Perhaps at that time we may feel that we are evaluating not only Jimmy Carter the man, but Jimmy Carter's *government*, the sum and drift of the federal bureaucracy's decisions during his term in office. It's a nice idea, but it is a delusion. Jimmy Carter cannot be fairly held responsible for many of his administration's actions because he is *not* responsible. He doesn't have enough power.

If this argument seems perverse, it is because over the years we have gotten used to thinking of our chief executive as an imperial, and imperialistic, figure, continually usurping authority from the other parts of the state. But although the president may still be king in foreign affairs, when it comes to domestic policy he has precious few levers to pull in his struggle to control his government. He cannot, thanks to the civil service system, choose the vast majority of those who will work with him. He cannot fire or control the heads of the dozens of "independent agencies," and even the rules made within the executive branch have been shielded by Congress from his influence. How imperial is a president who must plead with the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board—a tenured official who invariably seems to be appointed at a time when the president needs to curry favor with big business—not to pursue monetary policies that sabotage the president's basic economic plans? And, in the wake of Jimmy Carter's show of control over his cabinet, we should remember that he could not have directed any of his cabinet officers to alter a particular "administrative rule" without being taken to court for interfering with the judicially-supervised rulemaking process.

If the president is to have a decent chance to seize control of his own administration, he must first have the constitutional power to direct, and if necessary, fire, the people in the agencies who actually make up the government.

This means, first of all, no more "independent" agencies—no more Federal Reserve Boards, Nuclear Regulatory Commissions, or Interstate Commerce Commissions, bodies that control government policy on vital national issues but whose heads, once appointed, must be blustered and cajoled by the president into pursuing policies consistent with his own. The Fed, ICC, and NRC might continue to exist or they might not—but if they did they would be under the president's jurisdiction. The only exception we might make to this rule would be for the agencies that do things like decide veterans or workers compensation claims, involving the case-by-case application of settled rules—in other words, agencies whose function is the same as that of the courts. Most "independent agencies," however, whether they make rules, set rates, or license powers plants, are doing things the voters should have control over.

But it also means that the president should have the authority to choose

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enough of the government's staff, up and down the line, in all the agencies, to ensure that the bureaucracy as a whole is committed to the actions he was elected to take. The secretary of HEW can make all the "welfare policy" she wants, but if the file clerk in the regional office misroutes the checks, those policies won't do much good. What virtues the present civil service system possesses—the continuity it guarantees, the protection it affords whistleblowers—could be retained by allowing Congress, if it wishes, the limited constitutional power to scatter a reasonable number of tenured positions around the agencies. Today, the Constitution works in precisely the opposite direction, protecting the file clerk against "political" dismissal, guaranteeing the tenure of all civil servants as "property rights" under the Fifth Amendment. (See "How the Supreme Court Sabotaged Civil Service Reform," *The Washington Monthly,* December 1978.)

If these changes can put the president in charge of the domestic bureaucracy, a parallel reform can put Congress back in the business of approving our laws, and standing by the results. The "legislative veto," which would allow the Congress to disapprove the rules proposed by agencies, offers the hope of accomplishing this. The "veto" even has support on Capitol Hill, but in a form that would only *allow* Congress to nullify regulations rather than requiring the House and Senate to actually vote on them. Under this scheme, if Congress simply did nothing, an agency's proposed regulation would become law. The senators and representatives would never have to go on record as supporting it, and the public could go on blaming the agencies and not Congress.

This feature may explain some of the veto's popularity with congressmen, who have grown comfortable with a system in which they can avoid responsibility for agency actions. But it is a defect easily cured—simply by requiring that all regulations be subject to a veto on which there must be a recorded vote. *That* would make the congressmen squirm, which is exactly what we want. If a senator voted against a pollution regulation, he would have to justify it to his constituents. If he voted *for* a set of rules, he would have to be able to stand up and say, "Yes, we need this, this is about the best we can expect to do." His constituents would let him know if he had made the right choice.

The congressmen will object that they simply don't have time to pass upon all the rules the government needs to make. Maybe they will quote Sam Rayburn, who, when he reflected on the regulatory commissions he had bequeathed to the nation, didn't talk about "expertise" or "independence," but said simply the agencies "were created to do what we don't have the time to do." And it's fair to say that Congress will never be able to vote on the 8,000 or 9,000 regulations now issued annually. But all this means is that some mechanism would have to be found to separate the important rules, on which Congress would have to vote, from the mass of less significant regulations. Surely it is not impossible to design a system that would require the Congress to approve, for example, the basic fuel economy and emissions standards for cars, while leaving it to the EPA or DOT to come up with the exact procedures for testing them.

Cut Out The Courts

Together, these changes would move us toward a system in which the president takes responsibility for proposing regulations while the Congress votes them up or down. It is a system that promises to give us better rules, *when* we need them, instead of after years or decades of lawyering.

First, by putting the president in charge of the agencies that propose rules, we would prevent the familiar sight of "independent" agencies with distinct goals taking actions that contradict each other. No longer could the EPA try to encourage higher auto

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mileage while the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration single-mindedly requires safety features that make cars heavier and less economical. The president would be able to step in and reconcile the two goals. No longer would the government close down factories to improve air quality with one hand while it struggles to shore up those same factory towns with the other. The president, responsible to both environmentalists and labor, would have to make the choice.

Under this system an administrator might think twice before proposing a rule simply to satisfy his agency's constituency, its employees, or a subcommittee chairman—since the rule would have to please the president and a majority of Congress as well. At the least, we could expect a decline in the number of edicts on such essentials as the construction of toilet seats (which OSHA rules once covered) or the burning issue of whether medicines for stomach aches should be labeled "antacids" or should merely reveal that they possess "antiflatulent" properties (recently debated by the FTC). And maybe, once they were responsible for the output of the agencies, the politicians would even be moved to bring some sanity to the government's regulatory structure—eliminating, perhaps, the current situation in which 16 separate agencies and departments (six of them now "independent") take day-to-day actions directly governing the nation's consumption and production of energy.

Finally, once the politicians have chosen their course—be it regulation or deregulation—we might take the truly radical step of protecting them from judicial veto. The rationale is simple: if the people's representatives have spoken, it is no longer relevant that a judge thinks they have "failed to consider all the relevant factors" or have "abused their discretion." That is for the voters to say. In retrospect, we have never really needed the courts to decide things like how to label peanut butter—we drafted them to check up on bureaucrats who were accountable in no other way. Once the agencies are under direct *political* control, we can free the judges for more appropriate, and vital, tasks—like their original job of protecting the Bill of Rights. And, as long as the politicians don't invade those rights, we can free them to take action without having to wait years to read their judicial reviews.

This will take some getting used to. We have been captives in the regulatory trench wars of lawyers for so long that the very thought of the government making a decision of consequence without first asking judicial permission seems—well, it seems unconstitutional. And, without a constitutional amendment, it may actually *be* unconstitutional. There is an elastic clause in the Bill of Rights itself—the "due process" clause—and any even moderately-honed legal mind can come up with a dozen reasons why his client is due no process other than a judge's "probing, in-depth review" of a regulation as a matter of *right*. Several previous attempts by Congress to limit the role of the courts have, in fact, already fallen victim to Justice Brandeis' elegant phrase that "under certain circumstances the constitutional requirement of due process is a requirement of judicial process." Or, as one prominent administrative law expert put it, less elegantly, in a recent article: "Regardless of what the bills say, judicial review will somehow be made available. The only question is whether this fact is recognized now or after numerous appeals and several years of uncertainty."

Unseparate The Powers

By giving the president control over the bureaucracy, making the Congress vote on major regulations, and restricting "judicial review," we would restore responsibility for writing all of our laws to the original, elected branches of government. But we would not remove the structural barriers—the separation of powers, the fragmented Congress—that the Framers put in the way of responsible, active government. It was,

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in large part, to avoid these limitations that we created the regulatory bureaucracy, and they will seem all the more ominous if we ask the original constitutional institutions to bear the full load of governing. At its most frightening, there is the possibility that what happened to Jimmy Carter's gas rationing plan would be repeated on a massive scale, with each rule proposed by the executive rejected by the legislature, and the government grinding to a halt. Confronting this problem means asking ourselves whether, in its Madisonian obsession with the tyranny of the majority, our system has produced an equal, maybe greater danger of the tyranny of the minorities.

This is not to say that majorities can't be oppressive. Imagine yourself a midwestern farmer, confronted with a consumerist majority in Congress that cares *only* about low prices, and you will immediately see the basis for the Founding Fathers' fear, and the wisdom in at least one of their solutions—because the farmer's very survival might depend on the ability of his congressman to trade his vote on a number of less pressing issues in exchange for protection of the farmer's essential interest. As a technique for protecting minorities, it is hard to quarrel with the Constitution's choice of a legislature in which the champions of the various regions and interests have a reasonable opportunity to barter their support and reach a consensus.

But, unfortunately, the Framers didn't stop there. Instead, they followed the theory of their day and separated the elected government into the executive and legislative branches. By the simple expedient of maximizing the possibilities for governmental stalemate and breakdown, the threat of the majority was further reduced. Since 1932, the federal government has had a lot more governing to do than in 1787, and the "separation of powers" has served mainly as a blueprint for paralysis among our politicians. The basic pattern is familiar: A president will be elected, claiming a mandate, but he will be unable to get his program through Congress. Congress will manage to pass some laws, but they are vetoed. Each branch blames the other for the impasse and the voters can never be sure whom to believe. Responsibility, as well as the possibility of constructive action, falls through the cracks between the separated powers.

If we are going to ask the president and Congress to resume the full task of governing, we will have to, in the name of majority rule, temper or abandon the Founding Fathers' relentless pursuit of interbranch discord. In particular, we would want to give the president, as the only official elected by a national constituency, a greater chance to accomplish what he was elected to do.

First, we might allow him to structure his party's efforts in Congress. To this end, he could be authorized to name his party's congressional leaders, to determine the committee structure, and, if his party were in the majority, to name the committee chairmen. Where the committees are now set up to meet the internal needs of Congress, they would instead be structured to best serve the president's need for the quickest, most favorable hearing for his legislation. It is not likely, for example, given this power, that a president would subject one of his cabinet departments to the ministrations of 35 different congressional committees and subcommittees, as Congress has done with the Department of Energy. And the effect of committee "patronage" power would strengthen the president's hand by giving chairmen, and would-be chairmen, a vested interest in the fate of their party's leader and his programs.

There is another weapon we could give the president against the inherent selfishness of Congress. This reform would recognize that the power of "special interests" derives from a simple political rule of thumb: a small group with an intense interest frequently can triumph over a majority with a more diffuse, but collectively greater interest. This is a principle that has flourished best in the dark recesses

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of obscure regulatory agencies—for example, the ICC, where the trucking industry has traditionally defeated the general public's interest in greater competition. But it operates well enough, thank you, in Congress, where the practice of log-rolling enhances the power of narrow, intense minorities. At a time when, on an increasing number of issues, a coalition of these minorities seems able to exploit this natural advantage to thwart the national interest, we need a means of forcing each of them to feel the weight of the majority on the particular issue that concerns them.

There is a way to do this: the plebiscite. The antidote to the special interests might be to allow the president, on occasion, to frame a national referendum on an issue like gun control. This power would bring Congress under some semblance of majoritarian discipline, to balance its built-in centrifugal tendencies. If such a provision had been in effect last spring, for example, we could have had a gas rationing plan in June or July, when we needed it. When Congress rejected the scheme, President Carter could have taken it directly to the voters. The best part about such a power is that it would rarely have to be used. The mere threat of a nationwide vote would have a heartening effect on the willingness of any minority interest group to go to the wall in Congress to block majority action.

All these proposals would violate, intentionally, the theory underlying our Constitution. They would tie the elected branches of government back together, with bonds of political power. But they also might enable our political leaders to do something the Founding Fathers feared—to act.

Today, faced with a political apparatus that seems unable to respond in any direction to our needs, we are in danger of losing our faith in democracy itself. We have taken to sniping at our democratic institutions, while we have grown disturbingly comfortable under our judicial commissars. When we are confronted with the idea of returning regulatory decisions to Congress, we may respond contemptuously, like law professor Abram Chayes, writing in the *Harvard Law Review:* "To retreat to the notion that the legislature itself—Congress!—is in some mystical way adequately representative of all the interests at stake. . . is to impose democratic theory by brute force on observed institutional behavior." Or we may simply say, as Ralph Nader does: "I don't trust a legislature that is for sale. I trust judges who aren't."

The alternative is to realize that if our political institutions aren't responding, we have the power to change them. Then, instead of sneering at the Congress or the presidency, we could be thinking of ways to make them truly responsive and effective. Instead of retreating to the courts, we might accept the challenge of putting the people back in control of their government. Instead of fearing constitutional change, perhaps, we will decide that we will need Con Con II—not to balance the budget, but to make our democracy work again. ■

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Roxie Munro

Where to Stay in Washington

Capitol Hill

Almost everyone who comes to Washington ends up on "the Hill" at some point during their stay. For people with government-related business, there's Congress, of course, but there's a lot of other government action nearby, at the Departments of HEW and Labor, the SEC, Supreme Court, Library of Congress, General Accounting Office, Government Printing Office, and U.S. District Court. If you're a tourist, Capitol Hill is near most of what you'll want to see—the museums, monuments, and galleries. And if you're a train buff, Union Station is on the Hill. But if you plan to stay on Capitol Hill make your reservations early; there are only four hotels, and they're usually booked far in advance (especially when Congress is in session).

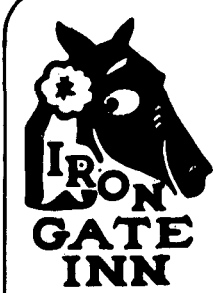
The Commodore, 520 N. Capitol St., N.W. (202) 628-2300, states in its brochure that it's a place for the "cost-conscious," and it's right. You get only the basics—bed, bath, window air conditioner, TV, and no room service or meeting facilities—but at very reasonable rates. The building and the 140 rooms are in various stages of overdue repair, renovation, and redecoration, but the signs are that when it's all done in a few months, it should be a comfortable, reasonably attractive place. Until then, to avoid the rooms with crumbling plaster, gaps around the air conditioner, or the older, slightly garish decor, request the higher prices. Singles, $25-$30; doubles, $35-$40; suites, $45-$55. Additional persons in room, $6 each; children under 12 free. Parking in a garage nearby is $5 a night. The one restaurant, **The Dubliner**, is a reasonably priced Irish pub with live Irish entertainment and very popular with the Hill crowd for lunch and dinner (it also serves breakfast).

The Bellevue, 15 E St., N.W. (202) 638-0900, is also essentially a "basics" hotel, but it's a step up from the Commodore in decor—with the interesting, old-Europe style lobby and the newly refurbished rooms (half of the 200 in the hotel now completed)—and a few convenient extras like a laundromat, soda machines on each floor, and free parking across the street. There's a cafeteria and the moderately priced **Tiber Creek Pub**, where you can wash English pub food down with English ale in front of the fireplace. Singles, $28.50-$38.50; doubles, $38.50-$48.50; suites, $60-$75. (Higher rates are the refurbished rooms.) Additional persons in room, $7 each; children under 12 free.

The Hyatt Regency, 400 New Jersey Ave., N.W. (202) 737-1234, (800) 228-9000 is *the* place to stay—that is, if you can afford such things as $7.30-a-night parking and a continental breakfast in your room for $4.75. For the most part, the hotel does its best to give you your money's worth. After a dramatic entry—via an escalator through a maze of fountains, greenery, and chrome and fabric partitions topped off by a six-story glass and steel skylight—you can zip up in a glass-cage elevator to a quite attractive room with plenty of nice, nonessential extras: carpeted and marbled bath with free shower cap, shampoo, and bath oil, in-house movies on TV, and 24-hour room service, as well as complimentary coffee and *The Washington Post* in the lobby every morning. The three restaurants do a fine job of keeping up the high-price standards. The best for the price is **Jonah's Oyster Kitchen**, with a wide assortment of seafood dishes and an oyster bar as well. **Hugo's** ranks high for its roof-top view and ambience, but not its expensive French fare. If you don't mind passersby peering into your soup, the cafe-style **Park Promenade** in the lobby is the least expensive. There are 811 rooms plus 39 suites, and one floor devoted entirely to meeting rooms (23 in all) and a 1,650-seat ballroom. A bus to Dulles airport stops at the door. Singles, $70-$90; doubles, $90-$110; suites, $130-$350. Additional persons in room, $10 each; children under 14 free.

The Quality Inn, 415 New Jersey Ave., N.W. (800) 228-5151, (202) 638-1616, right across the street from the Hyatt, is Capitol Hill's happy compromise, in size—340 sleeping rooms, seven meeting rooms, 750-seat ballroom—and price. It's a good place for the family: from May to September a decent-sized pool and fast-food restaurant are open on the roof terrace, there's a sauna and exercise room open year round, and like the Hyatt you can watch movies on the TV in the rooms. There's a laundromat, the 1890s-style **Coach and Parlor** restaurant (moderately expensive), and free parking. The bus to Dulles stops here, too. Singles, $56-$64; doubles, $66-$75; suites, $135 and $185. Additional persons in rooms, $9 each; children under 16 free.

—*Carol Trueblood*



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Richard Reeves on Political Books

Richard Reeves is on vacation. The column is written this month by Charles Peters.

At college I knew Norman Podhoretz as someone who attended a class with me, but not as a friend or even as someone to chat with outside. Columbia was that way, especially if you lived off-campus, as I did. At my graduation ceremony, which I attended because it was compulsory, Jason Epstein was the only person I saw with whom I had more than a nodding acquaintance. Nevertheless, Columbia was an exciting place with some remarkably good teachers and remarkably bright students, including Podhoretz, Epstein, and Allen Ginsberg.

The class Podhoretz and I took together was a course in 20th-century fiction taught by Harrison Steeves. I sat in the back of the room, since the lures of life in New York often left me less than prepared for the discussions of the morning. Podhoretz sat in the front and was always prepared. He was constantly waving his hand, constantly talking, constantly trying to impress Professor Steeves. The problem was that Podhoretz was a Jew from Brooklyn, while Steeves was a snobbish old Wasp with little patience for the upwardly mobile. However brilliant Podhoretz might be, Steeves was not going to give him the recognition he so avidly sought. Instead, Steeves' regard was bestowed on one Donald Maher, a reserved young man with the right accent (who, curiously enough, was to become the roommate of Epstein, who was, of course, to become Podhoretz's number one enemy).

The juxtaposition of Podhoretz and Steeves was hilarious to those of us on the back bench. But our laughter did not reflect dislike of Podhoretz—indeed, most of us were grateful to him for deferring the dread moment when Steeves might ask, "Well Mr. Peters, what do you think Proust is trying to say?"

It was thus with some surprise that I read 20 years later in *Making It* that Podhoretz thought he had "aroused so much hostility among certain Columbia types," whom he described as "those B students who rarely said anything in class. . . the homosexuals with their supercilious disdain. . . the prissily bred middle-class Jews. . . . Their hostility caused me considerable pain."

Since I knew it wasn't hostility in my own case—I positively sympathized with Podhoretz because of a similar experience of my own, a classroom collapsing with laughter each time my southern Appalachian accent encountered a French word—I felt I might have found a key to understanding Podhoretz, or at least to understanding that where he went wrong was in overreacting to real or imagined criticism. And, indeed, this overreaction has continued to this day. In *Breaking Ranks* (Harper & Row), his new book about his split with the New Left, he describes a meeting in which he discussed racial quotas with the admissions staff of Harvard College, none of whom agreed with his view:

"As I spoke—and I was speaking in a low-keyed and non-provocative style—the eyes around me grew narrower and the

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nostrils grew wider, and when I finished the questions were so charged with hatred that I found myself wondering whether even a public reading from *Mein Kampf* could have elicited greater outrage."

What he thinks are others' reactions to him at times at least mirrors Podhoretz's feelings for his fellow man. Here is what he said about the writings of Jack Kerouac:

"... there is a suppressed cry in these books: Kill the intellectuals who can talk coherently, kill the people who can sit still for five minutes at a time, kill those incomprehensible characters who are capable of getting seriously involved with a woman, a job, a cause."

If you've read Kerouac, you know how far from the mark that is. Podhoretz was equally hostile to Kerouac's friend, Allen Ginsberg. And that is tragic, because of all our contemporaries at Columbia, Ginsberg could have done the most to save Podhoretz's soul. Allen was infinitely more aware than most adolescents of the danger of losing touch with oneself in the process of trying to impress others—of how that could keep you from laughing at yourself, from facing your own inadequacies so that you did not have to hate those who criticized you—so that you could contemplate the possibility of being laughed at and loved at the same time—and most of all so that you did not have to hate yourself.

Norman never learned these lessons. Here is what Podhoretz says about his relationship with Jacqueline Kennedy in Kitty Kelley's book, *Jackie Oh!*:

"I had a tremendous crush on her. It went on for about a month or six weeks. We'd be on the phone three and four and five times a day, but nothing ever came of it. I could kick myself now. I'll always regret I was too chicken to make the final pass, but I could see myself doing it and her saying, 'Why, you poor little thing. Did you think you could sleep with the President's widow? Oh, poor darling.' I couldn't take that thought. So I let it slip by. I don't know what happened. I got dropped. Maybe because I didn't make a move, or maybe because I might have made one. It was very dangerous for me. My wife hated her."

And I bet his wife hated him, too, when she read those words. Because what all his worries about making an impression added up to was a story that was bound to hurt her.

Decent people ordinarily inflict that kind of hurt only when they are so worried about what others are thinking of them that they forget to think about others. Since I think Podhoretz is a decent man, I think he should stop worrying. He has written an important book, *Making It*. He edits an important magazine, *Commentary*. He has often been right and sometimes even profound in his resistance to radical chic. The only thing he has to fear is his own self-importance and the self-importance of the group he has christened the Family, the community of New York intellectuals of which he is part. They are largely irrelevant now as are most of their debates, the kind of arguments that can be waged from one library to another. The issues in *Breaking Ranks* are like that—growth vs. no-growth, defense vs. no defense. What we need instead of those abstract arguments is specifics on the kind of growth and the kind of defense that will be sensible and effective. For an example of the latter, see the current *Atlantic*, where James Fallows has an article on defense infinitely more useful than anything the Family has done on the subject, because it combines the intellectual distinction that characterizes the Family at its best with the kind of reporting that subjects theory to the test of fact. The Family is handicapped not only by its distaste for leaving the library, but by its failure, perhaps caused by its identification with the professional class, to see the problem created by lawyers, civil servants, and tenured academics, and the even more important difference between the meritocrats who merely achieve and entrepreneurs who truly create.

The life of a writer and the life of a New Yorker rank high on the scale of paranoia-inducing experiences, so the Family, combining both experiences as it does, is the one group in which Podhoretz can feel normal. It will take a considerable act of will for him to separate himself from it, to stop acting as its members do, and to go on to more important work. He may be able to motivate himself by recalling the Family's reaction to *Making It*.

The family was, according to Norman Mailer, "scandalized, shocked, livid, revolted, appalled, disheartened, and enraged... furious to the point of biting their white icy lips.... No fate could prove undeserved for Norman, said the Family in thin quivering late-night hisses."

—*Charles Peters*

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political book notes

Public affairs books to be published in October

American Workers Abroad. Robert Schrank, ed. MIT Press, $12.50.

Applied Program Evaluation in Local Government. Theodore H. Poister, James C. McDavid, Anne Hoagland Magoun. Lexington, $22.95.

Breaking Ranks: A Political Memoir. Norman Podhoretz. Harper & Row, $15. See Charles Peters' review on page 61.

The Construction Industry: Balance Wheel of the Economy. Julian E. Lange, Daniel Quinn Mills. Lexington, $17.95.

Drunk Before Noon: The Behind-the-Scenes Story of the Washington Press Corps. Ken K. Hoyt with Frances Spatz Leighton. Prentice-Hall, $12.95.

Endgame: The Inside Story of SALT II. Strobe Talbott. Harper & Row, $12.95. What's good about this book is that Talbott really does seem to know the "inside story" of how SALT was negotiated. What's bad about it is that as the diplomatic correspondent for *Time*, Talbott writes in classic *Time* style, combining a weakness for the inane detail ("Slocombe... installed a tape deck that played, as a kind of highbrow white noise, Beethoven symphonies and other classics....") with a penchant for the sweeping generalization.

—*Joseph Nocera*

The Energy War: Reports from the Front. Harvey Wasserman. Lawrence Hill, $12.95/$5.95.

The Golden Door: International Migration, Mexico, and the United States. Paul R. Ehrlich, Loy Bilderback, Anne H. Ehrlich. Ballantine, $12.95.

Hubert: The Triumph and Tragedy of the Humphrey I Knew. Edgar F. Berman. Putnam's, $10.95.

Marvella: A Personal Journey. Marvella Bayh with Mary Lynn Kotz. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $11.95. See Joseph Nocera's article in the September issue of *The Washington Monthly*.

The Man Who Kept the Secrets: Richard Helms and the CIA. Thomas Powers. Alfred A. Knopf, $12.95. This is a meticulously researched, prudently balanced account of the highlights of the agency's history and its most cautious professional leader, Richard Helms, a man who for 30 years was at the center of national and international intrigue.

Powers talked to all the principals in that drama still living. He read all the documents available to researchers and all the narratives others have written. The result is a remarkably lucid revelation of the moral ambiguity of a career in clandestine intelligence.

Working in the CIA's Clandestine Services created a personality Powers sums up thus: "CIA people are cynical in most ways, but their belief in secrets is almost metaphysical. In their bones they believe they know the answer to that ancient paradox of epistemology which asks: If a tree falls in the forest without witness, is there any sound? The CIA would say no.... If no one knows we tried to kill Castro, then we didn't do it. If ITT's role in Chile is never revealed, then commercial motives had nothing to do with the Allende affair. If the CIA's role in overthrowing Mossadegh remains hidden, then the Iranians did it all by themselves. If Operation Chaos remains a secret, the CIA never joined the FBI as a threat to American liberties. If no one knows how many Free World leaders had to be bribed, then we were something purer than the highest bidder...."

—*Joseph Burkholder Smith*

On Every Front: The Making of the Cold War. Thomas G. Paterson. Norton, $14.95.

Out of Control. George Gordon Liddy. St. Martin's, $10.95. (fiction)

Power on the Left: American Radical Movements Since 1946. Lawrence Lader. Norton, $14.95. Lader has managed to weave the chaos of riots, trials, shootouts, arrests, betrayals, bombings, radical chic, paranoia, and some real persecution into a

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coherent narrative. Some bits are priceless. Richard Pryor couldn't have improved on the performance of the Black Panther leader who sought to head off a split with the pro-women's-lib faction of SDS by lecturing the annual SDS convention on the Panthers' belief in "pussy power."

Needless to say, there was a split. There was always a split, and that could stand as the New Left's epitaph. Despite the Marxist trappings, the New Left was more a maelstrom of clashing egos than the vanguard of class struggle. Lader sees the SDS as privileged kids who tried "to get labor's children to give up everything for the Third World," and the Weathermen as "a self-appointed vanguard intending to set the terms of a revolution for a class they never understood." Though his sympathies are always clearly with the left, he has nevertheless written a clear-eyed analysis.

—*Blythe Babyak*

The Private World of Congress. Rochelle Jones, Peter Woll. Free Press, $14.95. An excerpt from this book begins on page 30 of this issue.

Senator William J. Stone and the Politics of Compromise. Ruth Warner. Kennikat.

A Turning Wheel: Three Decades of the Asian Revolution as Witnessed by a Correspondent for *The New Yorker*. Robert Shaplen. Random House, $15.

We Don't Want Nobody Nobody Sent: An Oral History of the Daley Years. Milton L. Rakove. Indiana University, $12.50. It's 1948, and Abner Mikva, young, naive, idealistic, walks into a Chicago precinct headquarters one day. He walks up to the precinct captain and volunteers to help get the vote out. The captain looks him up and down and asks, "Who sent you?" Mikva says, "Nobody." And the captain stops chomping on his cigar just long enough to say, "We don't want nobody nobody sent."

Cute story, eh? This book is full of stories—and that's its problem. In what is becoming a Chicago genre (since Studs Terkel is its most famous practitioner), this is what they call "oral history." Which means, apparently, an author can compile interview upon interview and story upon story, with not even an attempt at analysis or thought or, for that matter, editing. At least that's what Rakove's done. As a result, he has managed to make a potentially engrossing subject—the life and times of the Daley machine—tedious and tortured.

—*Alison O'Neil*

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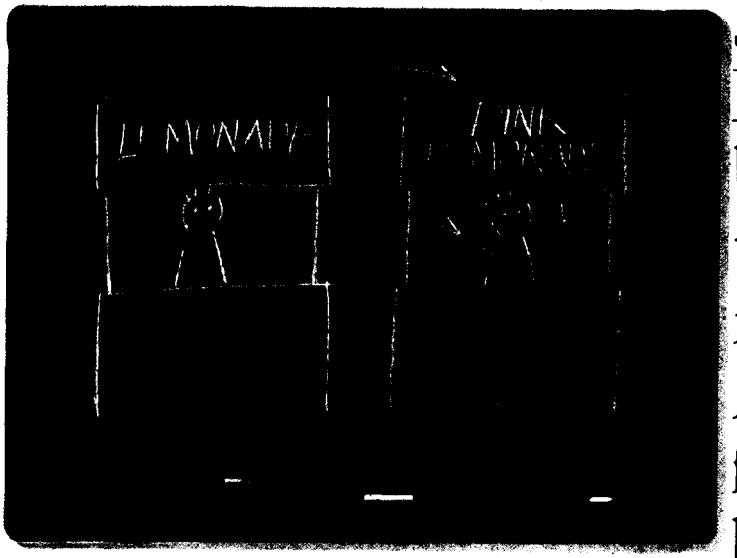

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